Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

AFTER SOUTHPORT

by

HARRY POLLITT

JULY 1939 SIXPENCE

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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

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Editor: R. PALME DUTT

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Our New Step

Since its first publication, exactly eighteen years ago, the LABOUR MONTHLY *has carried the sub-title, "A Magazine of International Labour," and has always lived up to it. Our connections with foreign countries, and particularly with the English-speaking Dominions and the U.S.A., have been very close.*

We believe that the LABOUR MONTHLY *has a definite rôle to play in the Labour and democratic movements of other countries. The Notes of the Month provide a commentary on world affairs and a guide to action which is eagerly read everywhere. Other articles keep our readers abroad informed of the progress of the movement in England, and vice versa.*

It is with the object of consolidating and extending this connection that we have appointed Contributing Editors to represent the English-speaking countries. Their sponsorship and the help and advice which they will be able to give us will help to drive home the links between the movements in all parts of the world.

We very much appreciate the consent to act in this capacity which has been given by the following :—

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George Seldes	..	(*New York, U.S.A.*)
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Mr. Boudin is the author of "The Theoretical System of Karl Marx" (well-known to the older generation of Marxist students in this country) and of "Government by Judiciary." He is a lecturer at the Workers' School, New York.

Mr. Seldes is author of "Freedom of the Press," "Sawdust Cæsar" and "You Can't Do That." Both he and Mr. Boudin are well known for their contributions to such periodicals as "New Masses" and "Science and Society."

Mr. Ryerson is known for his studies of Canadian history and for his work in the student movement and in journalism.

Mr. Finlay is a barrister and an outstanding figure in the Labour and democratic movement in South Africa.

Mr. Gordon Crane is a well known journalist and political publicist and lecturer in Australia. He is director of the Labour Research Bureau in Sydney.

Mr. McLagan is the recognised leader of the Trade Union movement in New Zealand. He is president of the New Zealand Federation of Labour, although as Contributing Editor he is acting in his individual capacity.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Illusions and Realities—Confusion of Public Opinion—Effects of Southport—Government's Real Policy—Lessons of Three Months—Exposure of Chamberlain's Aims—The Tactical Turn—Sharpers Out-Sharped—Fascism's New Thrust —Twists and Turns—Squaring the Circle—Anglo-Soviet Negotiations—"Fictitious Steps Forward" —Britain and the Baltic States—Systems of Loopholes—The New Appeasement Offensive —Official Labour's Responsibility—Bevin's Speech — Significance of Southport — Renewing the Fight

NO realities, however harsh, are so dangerous as illusions. During the past three months, since Hitler's occupation of Czechoslovakia, the people of this country have been fed on illusions, far exceeding the old Munich manœuvres. It is high time there was an awakening. Whatever the outcome of present negotiations, in fact an extremely dangerous situation is developing, and it is dangerous precisely because of the relative lull of public awareness and vigilance. There is to-day an extreme widening of the gulf between what is widely believed and what is. There is a gulf between what the British Government publicly proclaims that it is doing and what it is really doing. There is a gulf between the easy proclamations of victory and settled issues put out from Southport and the real situation and desperately urgent problems of the present stage of the labour movement. The sooner these gulfs are overcome, and we pass out of the land of fool's paradise into facing the stern realities which have to be met, the better hope for the future and for the real defeat of the existing dangers.

THE present confusion of public opinion is due to two main causes. First, the impression has been sedulously created and is still widespread that the international situation is now improved; that the Peace Front is in process of forma-

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tion; that the British Government has " stiffened " its policy; that the Fascist Powers are thrown on the defensive and have drawn in their horns; that Chamberlain and the protagonists of Munich are now moving, even if with disconcerting slowness and hesitations, to the full policy of the Peace Front and to full collaboration with the Soviet Union. This impression has been spread, not merely from official quarters, but principally and most actively from the left. The lion's skin has been well and truly carved up long before the lion has been killed; and speculative discussion of the new problems after the formation of a Peace Front, or after a Pact with the Soviet Union has been signed, have engaged far more sedulous attention than the real problems of the still dominant forces which are in fact preventing the formation of a Peace Front and manœuvring more actively than ever against the Soviet Union and for a renewal of the line of Munich. While the great part of the leadership of the left has been shouting premature hosannas of victory, and even congratulations to the leaders of reaction, these leaders of reaction have been unremittingly pursuing a very different line of policy, which may lead to some extremely unpleasant shocks of awakening in the near future.

THE second cause of the present confusion of public opinion, and temporary weakening of the tempo of the fight, at the time when its need is most acute and urgent, lies in a closely parallel situation of " *disarming* " of the mass movement and left forces also on the home political front, following the effects of the Southport Labour Party Conference. Southport was in fact—let us be under no illusions —a blow against the whole fight to defeat the Chamberlain Government. It was a direct and deliberate present of five years of power to Chamberlain; and only a very big change of the political situation and real mass awakening can now prevent the final delivery of that present at whatever moment Chamberlain chooses to call a general election. The most serious problems arise in consequence, for all who are concerned for the future of the political struggle in Britain, how to advance under these conditions, and how to carry forward

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the fight, in spite of the injury done by Southport. These problems are very carefully discussed in the special article by Harry Pollitt in the current issue. But once again it is notable that the attempt is assiduously being made, over the position at home as over the international field, to conceal the seriousness of the situation, to lull opinion, to create the impression that all the issues are henceforth "settled" after Southport, and that nothing remains for the labour and democratic movement save to accept the inevitable and amble along peaceably in the blinkers and ruts provided by Transport House to future defeat. Here also some elements of the left have fallen victims to the passive defeatist atmosphere and even assisted to transmit it. Here also the outcome is likely to yield no less unpleasant shocks in the home political situation in the near future, unless active steps are taken to spread effective awakening now before it is too late.

THERE is no excuse for mistaking the real policy of the Government; and an understanding of it is the first condition for a wider approach to the political situation. Three months ago, in the April issue of these Notes, we analysed the first indications of the tactical turn of the Government's foreign policy, and drew the conclusion that, also in and through the new tactical turn necessitated by events (the importance of which for the new possibilities thus opened of increased pressure on the Government to compel a real change of policy is undoubted), "Chamberlain still endeavours to carry on with his basic policy." Every event since then has justified this conclusion. To-day even those organs of the left which at the time hailed with their usual credulous glee the supposed conversion of Chamberlain to the policy of the Peace Front are now expressing as usual after the event their anxiety, doubts and disillusionment.

FOR three months a tense and protracted diplomatic struggle has been taking place over the future of Europe and the world. The fortunes of this struggle are analysed in the important article of R. F. Andrews on the Anglo-Soviet Negotiations in this number. On the one side the overwhelm-

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ing pressure of public opinion has demanded the building of the Peace Front and the conclusion of a Mutual Pact with the Soviet Union. The force of events and of unmistakable facts, with the now open and unconcealed menace of fascist plans against the peoples of France and Britain, has pressed in the same direction. The plain, open and common sense proposals of the Soviet Union, and the anxious urging of France have equally pressed in the same direction. Against all these forces the most stubborn, long drawn and back-to-the-wall resistance has been maintained, and up to the present successfully maintained by the old ruling group of British capitalism, represented by Chamberlain and Montagu Norman, yielding a tactical point here and there, forced by facts to modify their policy, but never letting go of their basic aims, and even utilising the atmosphere created by the supposed reversal of policy to pursue all the more actively their old aims.

WHY, after three months since the loudly proclaimed change of policy, has the Peace Front not yet been built up? Why, after three months, has the Pact with the Soviet Union (demanded by 87 per cent. of public opinion, according to the newspaper questionnaire) not been signed? The alleged reasons, the grounds of opposition have been continually shifting. As one pretext has been removed, a new one has been found. This very shifting is the most damning indication that the real grounds lie elsewhere. The straightforward character of the Soviet proposals, and the simple and consistent adherence of the Soviet Union to the principles of the Peace Front, has placed the Government in a very acute dilemma to find plausible public pretexts for refusing them. But this Protean opposition, this evasive stonewalling has in fact heavily exposed and begun to bring into the range of public consciousness the ulterior aims behind their policy. The whole character of these protracted negotiations has begun to lay bare and drag into the light of day, far more sharply than in any previous period, the real aims of British foreign policy under its existing reactionary leadership—aims which have so far prevented the signing of a Pact (the hope of such

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a negative outcome being openly proclaimed by Chamberlain's host, Sir Francis Lindley), and which it is abundantly clear would continue to operate even if a Pact were formally signed. It is of the utmost importance that the lesson of these negotiations should be learned, and that the left should clearly understand and face the reality of the strategy revealed by them, instead of continuing to treat Chamberlain as an innocent woolly-headed bungler, "shilly-shallying" (in the words of the Chairman of the Labour Party Conference) and incompetently endeavouring to execute the policy of the left ("trying to adopt in a feeble way our policy"—Attlee at Southport). For in fact there is a very definite policy revealed which carries forward the same basic aims as at Munich to a new stage and new conditions.

THE tactical turn in the Government's foreign policy is not only to be explained as a manœuvre under the pressure of public opinion at home or to deceive public opinion at home. Indeed, it would be more correct to describe it as a manœuvre in relation to Hitler, and primarily designed to impress Hitler; but even such an analysis would be inadequate. For, in fact, the tactical turn is governed by very definite objective conditions, and within its limited scope is serious. The situation since Munich, since the conquest of Czechoslovakia and the strategic domination of Spain by fascism, is no longer the same as before. The most enthusiastic applauders of Munich have been compelled to recognise that by these changes in the situation, consequent on Munich and the policy of "non-intervention" in Spain, the point of fascism's menace is now visibly turned against Britain and France. The hope of British policy that the opening of the gate of Czechoslovakia would lead straight to the attack on the Ukraine has not yet led to any such immediate sequel, but has led to a very different and uncalculated immediate outcome. The fascist Powers drew the very practical conclusion from Munich that, while the Soviet Union was strong and unyielding, the vulnerable and demoralised Powers were Britain and France, which were ready to betray their allies and place themselves at the mercy of their enemies. Thus the

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very pursuit of the aims of British policy was leading to the defeat of those aims and compelling a new turn.

IN this sense a partial disillusionment has taken place, not merely among the dupes of Munich, but among the protagonists of Munich. By April even the *Times* was compelled to recognise wryly that the Anti-Comintern Pact appeared to be turning into something not at all so delightful as the name had suggested :

> The Anti-Comintern Agreement began as a German-Japanese Agreement against their common opponent, Russia. It has become a combination of Germany and their satellite States against England and France. (*Times*, April 10, 1939).

Similarly the Munichite *Sunday Times* printed prominently an article contributed by the Polish ex-Premier, General Sikorski :

> Not so very long ago the Hitlerian propaganda was fully successful in its crusade against the Soviets. It actually reached the point last year when it presented its object as being the liberation of the Ukraine by the Germans ! The game was worth the candle. The state of mind thus created acted as smokescreen for the *Drang nach Osten*—the German policy of expansion. In particular, it cannot be doubted that this propaganda played a decisive part in the isolation and reduction of Czechoslovakia to impotency. It was to be utilised in the same way in respect of Poland.
>
> Nor can it be doubted that the fight of the Third Reich and its allies against the democracies has been facilitated by the Anti-Comintern Pact, in so far as the former have been able to constitute a single front, whose object is nothing less than a new partition of the world. (*Sunday Times*, June 4, 1939)

With this may be compared Stalin's biting comment : " One might think that the districts of Czechoslovakia were ceded to Germany as a price for an undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union, and now the Germans are refusing to pay their bills and are sending their creditors to Hades." The smart of the outraged creditors—sharpers out-sharped at their own game—stings through the columns of the *Times* and the speeches of the British gentlemen.

FASCISM has lost no time to follow up its advantage or to act on its conclusions. And this not only up to March,

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but also since March, during the very months in which Britain has most noisily threatened to move to the alternative policy of the Peace Front, and has even made a series of deprecatory half-gestures in that direction as slowly as possible, in the vain hope of impressing fascism, which has most unpolitely refused to be impreseed and insisted on sneering at the gestures as bluff. Japan in the Far East seized the Spratley Islands in March, landed troops in the International Settlement of Kulangsu in May, held up a British P. and O. liner outside Hong Kong, and proceeded to blockade Tientsin in June. In Europe Germany and Italy publicly converted the Axis in May into an offensive and defensive Military Pact, turned down with contempt Roosevelt's demand for guarantees against aggression, publicly boasted of their warlike achievements in Spain from the first weeks of the "civil war," declared that their arms had won the victory in Spain against the impotence of Britain and France, drew Spain into the Anti-Comintern Pact, and actively developed Spain as the military, naval and air base for a new thrust.

> The value to the Axis of full Spanish participation in the "knock-out blow" against France which is being freely discussed in unofficial circles in Spain cannot be under-estimated. Germany and Italy are certain to exercise great pressure to attain their ends, particularly since they left their aeroplanes in Spain. (*Times*, June 12, 1939).

THIS is the very actual background of the tactical turn in British policy. In the face of such a situation even the most reactionary crawling bootlickers of fascism were left with no alternative save to take some active steps, not from any desire to oppose Hitler, but if they were to have any hope of even reaching a bargain with Hitler. Without bargaining power, no bargain. The old policy of "non-intervention," of winking to fascism to go ahead and pretending not to notice, was now played out, when the fascist bandit raids were no longer proceeding in the directions desired, but threatening vital interests. An alternative had to be found. Britain had to find allies. But the only practical alternative was the policy of the Peace Front, the cornerstone of which would have to be a pact with the Soviet Union. To this the reactionary

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pro-fascists remained bitterly opposed. For they knew very well that a firm Peace Front, a serious Pact with the Soviet Union, would mean the end of all their deeper reactionary aims, the end of fascist war, the internal collapse of fascism, the victory of democracy and the unchecked advance of the peoples to socialism. This fear, and this direct opposition to a Pact with the Soviet Union, was openly expressed in the earlier stages of the new policy:

> Victory with the help of Russia could hardly fail to advance westwards the frontiers of Bolshevism. ("Scrutator" in the *Sunday Times*, May 7, 1939).
>
> A hard and fast alliance with Russia might hamper other negotiations and approaches. (*Times*, May 4, 1939).
>
> We have always tried to avoid this policy of what I call opposing blocks. (Chamberlain in the House of Commons, May 19, 1939).

The old aims remained embedded in the new policy. Hence the dilemma, and all the twists and turns.

THE Chamberlainites were in fact endeavouring to *square the circle*. They wanted an effective insurance system to guarantee themselves against the danger of Hitler attacking in the West. Such an insurance system could, however, only be built with the aid of the military strength of the Soviet Union in the East. But they wanted at the same time to avoid any binding obligations to the Soviet Union, that is, they wanted still to leave the path open to Hitler in the East, provided he would proceed, not south east against their spheres of interest in the Near and Middle East, but against the Soviet Union. The attempt to reconcile these incompatible aims became the laborious task of British diplomacy in these recent months. For the reactionary pro-fascist circles, associated with Chamberlain, Montagu Norman and the Federation of British Industries, the basic aim of all their policy, pursued with tenacious persistence through all these years since the coming to power of the National Government in Britain and of Hitler in Germany, has been and remains the aim of the counter-revolutionary alliance with fascism, with the point directed against the Soviet Union and also against the United States. The present necessity in a difficult situation

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to build a counter-weight of power against Hitler, not in order to defeat him, but in order to deflect him and control his course, is only a temporary tactical move in a deeper strategy. The tactical move has to be strongly enough based to achieve its purpose. But the basic aim is and remains to reach the counter-revolutionary agreement with Hitler. *To allow the tactical move to defeat their basic strategy would be equivalent to a collapse of all their strategy*. This they are not yet prepared to admit. Hence the indefatigable persistence with which they have set themselves during these months to solve the insoluble and square the circle.

THE first attempt at squaring the circle was the half-way house system, the limited guarantee system with the available secondary States in Eastern Europe, while excluding the Soviet Union. It was soon obvious that this solution was no solution. The guarantees were in fact incapable of fulfilment without the aid of the Soviet Union. In March the Soviet Union's proposals had been turned down. Reluctantly in April, after a month's loss of time, negotiations with the Soviet Union were opened. On April 15 the Soviet Union presented its proposals for a Mutual Pact of Britain and France with the Soviet Union. After three weeks' more delay these were turned down in the British reply of May 6. The second solution was attempted, of avoiding a direct pact with the Soviet Union, but seeking to involve the Soviet Union in the system of guarantees and counter-guarantees. This was declared to be equivalent to a "reciprocal" arrangement. The purpose to avoid real reciprocity was transparent. Between Britain and Poland there is a Pact of Mutual Guarantee. If Hitler were to attack Britain, Poland would have to fight, and the Soviet Union would then be drawn in by its guarantee to Poland. But if Hitler were to reach an agreement with Poland (as Britain was working for simultaneously) and then to attack the Soviet Union, Britain would be under no obligation; indeed Britain could even use the "guarantee" to Poland to come in on the side of the counter-revolutionary bloc.

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WHEN this amiable attempt to draw in the Soviet Union to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Britain, without any corresponding obligations to the Soviet Union, had been suitably exposed, the third solution was attempted with the British proposals in the latter part of May. Britain was now compelled to accept in principle the conception of a mutual pact. But this acceptance was so " hedged round with qualifications," as Molotov said, that " it may prove to be a fictitious step forward." No provision was included for immediate staff conversations to make the pact a reality. On the contrary, it was suggested that conversations should only begin after the aggression had taken place, that is, after the war was under way. A sudden enthusiasm was even developed for the League machinery as a possible delaying mechanism. But most significant of all was the refusal to apply to the Baltic States the same guarantees as to the other East European States. For Poland, for Roumania, for Greece, for Turkey a guarantee system was considered essential. Through these States the way opens south east to the old aims of German Imperialism, to the Near and Middle East, to Iraq and oil, to the " vital spheres of interest " of British Imperialism. But north east, through Latvia and Estonia and through Finland, lies the long planned strategic line of advance for the sudden thrust against Leningrad, against the Soviet Union. Here it was considered eminently reasonable in British official opinion that there should be no guarantee system. After all, there must be a loophole for fascism to break out somewhere.

WHEN it is remembered that these Baltic States have been since the war a marked sphere of British influence, and when it is further remembered that British military, naval and air representatives have been extremely active in these States, alongside active penetration of Nazi agents, this resistance to any proposal to extend the guarantee system to these States takes on a very definite interest. It may be recalled that Captain Grenfell stated his view in last month's issue of this journal " that in anticipation of and connivance with a German attack on the U.S.S.R. through the Baltic States. . . . this Government has already made secret commitments with

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Estonia and Finland for the use of the aerodromes in those countries for British aircraft operating against the U.S.S.R. in the event of such a war : these commitments appear to have been in existence for at least ten years." Interest was increased by the extremely curious simultaneous declarations suddenly emitted at this point by the Foreign Ministers of Estonia and Finland, valiantly vowing on behalf of their very small, weak and vulnerable countries that above all things they did not want to have their independence guaranteed or protected. The Estonian Foreign Minister even went so far as to say that, if any Power should intervene on behalf of collective security against an aggressor attacking their independence, they would regard the representative of collective security as the aggressor to be fought with all their means. The curious observed that this declaration was first published in the English language in an English journal, the *Baltic Times*.

IT is impossible to escape the general conclusion from all these negotiations that, the closer the negotiations with the Soviet Union have been drawn, the more the ulterior considerations of the Chamberlainites have protruded at one awkward point after another. Less important than any particular loophole at a given point has been the continuous *system of loopholes*. It has become more and more obvious that they want what they intend to be, whatever the form, a *one-way agreement* with the Soviet Union. If they should themselves, against their calculations and desires, find themselves involved in direct danger and attack from fascism, then they would graciously " not despise " (in Mr. Chamberlain's elegant phrase) the assistance of the most powerful State in the world. But they are not prepared to give up their alternative plans, which rest on the aim of the counter-revolutionary bargain with fascism. As soon as this essential line is understood, not only the peculiar character of their mysteriously protracted negotiations with the Soviet Union becomes as clear as daylight, but also the reasons for their simultaneous to all appearance contradictory moves of renewed active assistance to fascism and direct continuance of Munich.

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FOR the negotiations with the Soviet Union are only one half of the picture—and up to the present the negative half. But there is a very positive half during the same period, and that is on the side of the relations to fascism. For this same period of the supposed "stiffened" stand against fascism has seen such very practical concrete actions (not verbal declamations and rotund speeches) as the handing over of six million pounds of Czech gold to Germany, the handing over of rich royalties for the stolen Bren gun patents to Germany, the connivance at the breach of the Anglo-Italian Agreement over the leaving of the Italian war material in Spain, the revival of the F.B.I.-Nazi Trade Agreement and continued close meetings, the moves for a "settlement" over Danzig, the moves through the Papal initiative for a Five Power Conference excluding the Soviet Union, and the final open launching of the new "appeasement" offensive through the successive declarations of Chamberlain and Halifax on June 8 ("any of Germany's claims were open to consideration," "the Government were not only willing but anxious to explore the whole problem of economic *Lebensraum*," "no settlement by negotiation could be worse than by war"—the old language of Munich) followed by the declaration of Stanley on June 9 with regard to the resumption of the F.B.I.-Nazi economic offensive alliance as soon as "a restoration of confidence would allow negotiations to be resumed." All this, be it marked, not even after the reaching of a firm Peace Front, but while the Peace Front is being prevented and sabotaged. Is it surprising that, after the first hesitations of the fascist Powers in the face of the possibility of a Peace Front being reached, all these proceedings have served as the direct invitation to them to resume their offensive (Japan's full attack in the Far East, following immediately the Chamberlain-Halifax speeches, and Germany's renewed activity in Central Europe)?

THESE are the realities which make so serious at present the character and responsibility of the fight against the Government, against the policy which it is pursuing and the deception which it is practising upon the people. And these

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are the realities which made so serious the surrender of that fight and abdication of the greater part of the official left leadership at the present moment, especially the Labour Party leadership, which reached its culmination at Southport. The fatal record of official Labour over Spain and over Munich is being repeated on a bigger scale in relation to the far vaster and ultimately more menacing manœuvre of to-day. *It is the left, the official "Opposition," that has rebuilt the credit of the Government, discredited after the exposure of Munich, and since those days of the proclaimed turn in March has acted as the sounding-board of the Government's policy.* Hence the confusion of public opinion. What would not be believed from the organs of the right, from the official organs of the perpetrators of Munich, is believed from the organs of the left, from the supposed critics of the Government. This is the mechanism of the British propaganda machine. In this mechanism the official Labour leadership and the *Daily Herald* have performed their ignoble rôle, acting as the advertising agents of the Government's policy, and thus screening its real aims and disorganising the opposition.

BUT it is not only a question of negative refusal of leadership of the fight against the Government. It is a question of positive collaboration in the real policy of the Government, the policy of so-called "appeasement" (*i.e.*, assistance to the warmakers). We have seen how in the beginning of June the Government, having successfully delayed the Peace Front, thought the moment opportune to come out with its open "appeasement" offensive. At the self-same date Labour did the same. This was the significance of the main speech of the Southport Conference, the speech of the real director of policy, Bevin—a speech which was received with transports of joy by the Nazi press. On June 9 the *Daily Herald* came out to "correct" the statements that the Government had adopted Labour's policy. It declared that the Government had only adopted one side of Labour's policy, collective resistance to aggressors, but it "criticised" the Government for insufficiently following up Labour's main policy, appeasement or "constructive peace":

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> It is sometimes said, even by some Labour speakers, that the Government has now adopted Labour's foreign policy. That is not true. What it has done, having brought Britain and the world to the brink of disaster, is to abandon "appeasement" in favour of the organisation of a defensive pact against aggression, such as Labour has consistently urged.
>
> That is very well so far as it goes. But it is only a part of Labour's policy of constructive peace—that policy of international betterment and international economic improvement which was so finely described by Ernest Bevin at Southport, and which alone can strike at the root of the causes of war.

Step by step, the official Labour policy thus acts as the gramophone of each stage of the Government's policy.

THE home policy of Southport was only the counterpart of this basic policy. The refusal of the People's Front was only the expression of the refusal of the fight against the Chamberlain Government. On the eve of Southport the Manchester Fabian Society issued the results of a purely factual piece of research into the record of by-elections as a pointer for a general election, irrespective of any expressions of opinion. It found that if the exact proportions of turnover of votes through all the by-elections since the general election were reproduced for the whole country to show the consequent results for a general election on this basis, the outcome would show 51 per cent. of the vote at a general election against the Government. On the existing proportions of parties (*i.e.*, on the assumption of refusal of the People's Front) this majority of votes against the Government would result in a Government majority of 63. If, with exactly the same votes, a People's Front were established, and only one opposition candidate stood against the Government in each constituency, these same votes would return a People's Government with a majority of 33. This is, of course, leaving entirely out of account the enormous pulling power that a united fight would have in restoring confidence and drawing in millions of hesitant or unpolled votes. The facts are inescapable; and no machine majorities (whether of the votes of trade union members recorded without consulting the membership, or of local labour parties which had to reach their decisions under threats of expulsion, while the discussion was on, if

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they did not support the official line) can change them. But the real issue is not the refusal of an electoral combination. The real issue is the refusal of the fight against the Chamberlain Government.

THE practical conclusions to be drawn from Southport, and the way forward for the fight in the present urgent situation, are indicated in Harry Pollitt's article in the current issue, which should be closely studied by all readers. One conclusion stands out above all others; and that is that the real need now is to awaken the entire labour movement from its present paralysis and from the deadening effect of the Southport decisions to active fight, to the fight against capitalism, against reaction, against the Chamberlain Government or the supporters of Chamberlain in its own ranks, and for the positive immediate aims in the home and foreign field. The People's Front is not "dead and buried," as its opponents try to pretend. But it can only become real when there is the first elementary basis of a revival of the labour movement and new awakening of the spirit of struggle, and therefore a readiness seriously to consider the tactics of struggle and the conditions of victory. *The People's Front is only for those who know how to fight and have the will to fight. The first elementary necessity for the labour movement is to begin to fight at all.* For, urgent as the situation is, the conditions and possibilities are still immensely favourable. The very success of the Government's policy in holding up the Peace Front and renewing appeasement is creating new difficulties for that policy; because it is inevitably encouraging the fascist Powers to new offensives while the road is still open. Thus the very intensification of the danger increases the favourable possibilities for turning the line of direction and forcing through the Peace Front and the Pact with the Soviet Union. The alternatives are not yet closed: the alternatives, either of incalculable disaster or of sweeping advance, are still open before the labour and democratic movement. Everything depends on refusing to allow the decisions of Southport to damp down the struggle, and meeting the situation with the most intensive renewal of agitation and struggle, and of united struggle, throughout the country. R. P. D.

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After Southport

BY HARRY POLLITT

THE SOUTHPORT CONFERENCE of the Labour Party was held in the Garrick Theatre. Right above the heads of the National Executive Committee hung a huge slogan: "They Conquer Who Believe They Can." This is an admirable sentiment, but in view of the proceedings, decisions and leadership given at the Conference, it is necessary to consider seriously whether they were of a character that can really guarantee the fulfilment of this sentiment.

It was the first Labour Party Conference since October, 1937. In the intervening period the face of the world has changed, and in changing has led to an enormous strengthening of the military, economic, financial and strategical position of the fascist aggressors.

Austria, Czechoslovakia and Spain are now within the orbit of fascism. Holland, Switzerland, Poland and the Scandinavian countries are in a state of tension and alarm. In Britain, every vital problem arising out of poverty and unemployment is callously ignored, while at the same time there is a steady encroachment on the democratic rights and liberties of the people, and the people are menaced by the fear of war.

History and the whole future of the Labour movement and the British people had placed a heavy responsibility on leaders and delegates alike.

Never was there a time when there was such need for discussion and clarity, for a serious and careful examination of every suggestion and alternative policy. We are no longer living in the old carefree days when time was not important, when what is not settled this year can be held over to the next Conference. Every minute and hour counts if poverty is to be attacked, if constructive schemes for combating unemployment are to be worked out, if the Peace Front is to be established and the peoples of the world spared those horrors of war which have already affected one-fourth of the human race.

The eyes of the whole world were upon Southport, for British Labour is powerful enough, if it will exert its power, to make it impossible for Chamberlain to govern, and the defeat of Chamberlain is the main task facing the Labour movement.

It would be political blindness not to recognise that the Chamberlain Government still holds a strong position, but only because it faces a weak and divided Opposition which seems to be in such general agreement with the Government it is supposed to be fighting.

This has had the effect, especially since the supposed change in the policy of the Government, of helping to build up a feeling of increased confidence in the Government.

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The result as a whole is seen in the absence of any organised and united fight against capitalism and the Government to improve the conditions of the workers, and reveals its political significance in every by-election which takes place.

The real significance of these by-elections is not so much who the people vote for, as the fact that in these critical times the majority of the people are not voting at all. The Labour Party has noted this fact, and promptly seeks to mislead the people by the creation of a mysterious being which it christens " Mr. Apathy." The impression is intended to be conveyed that people are not interested in politics and elections.

The real reason why people are not voting is that while basically they distrust the policy of the Chamberlain Government, they see no fighting alternative policy and leadership which can organise their *will to fight* for higher wages, control of rents, holidays with pay, extension of social services, and for the successful defence of peace and democracy; which can inspire them with confidence and is not afraid to place facts openly before them and show clearly what is to be done, and how.

This was the central problem before the Southport Conference. This is what the most active workers in the Labour movement expected the Conference to tackle. This is what the Conference Agenda revealed as the aim toward which the Local Labour Parties were striving. They are the active and thoughtful sections of the Movement that take the trouble to bring forward issues on the Agenda.

The failure of the leadership to show the way forward through working class unity and the People's Front, with no co-operation with the Chamberlain Government, was skilfully covered up by references to " Labour's Immediate Programme "; to " what the next Labour Government will do "; by loud boasts about " when we are in power." Those who used them did not for one second believe them to be immediately realisable. At bottom, it was an uneasy platform—uneasy because the more astute of the leaders were perfectly aware that the pretence they were making about " Socialism," " Power " and " the next Labour Government " was seen through by delegates who knew (as they know !) that everything done at Southport was only making these eminently desirable aims more difficult of future achievement.

The consequences of the Southport Conference to the Labour movement will be even more disastrous than those of the Edinburgh Conference in 1936 unless the whole Movement sets itself to help change the position; for the Southport Conference failed entirely to face up to the necessity to defeat the Chamberlain Government, and to plan the active policies and organisational measures which are necessary to win victory.

What is the basic explanation of this failure ? It is to be found in the " Notes of the Month " written in the November, 1936, issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY immediately after the Edinburgh Conference :

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> The National Government can only perform its world reactionary rôle so long as it can count on the effective paralysis of opposition from the working class in Britain. More; as it advances closer into the war zone, it requires the positive support and collaboration of the Labour Movement. This is the key to the inner tactical policy of the National Government, which is directed towards winning the co-operation of the upper stratum of the trade unions and Labour organisations against the tendencies of working class opposition. And this is the key to the underlying issues of Edinburgh. Behind all the issues of Edinburgh lay the question of the relation of the Labour Movement to the National Government; whether the Labour Movement shall retreat into co-operation with the National Government in the gathering war situation, or whether it shall organise and lead a united working class and Popular Front of opposition to defeat the National Government. On the outcome of this fight depends the immediate future in Europe, and therewith the issue of war or peace.

These words are even more true to-day, for Government and Labour policy has become more and more entwined, not so much perhaps in speeches and votes, but, much more important, in deeds, in such actions as the defence of non-intervention, the fervent "god-speed" to Chamberlain when he set out for Munich, the unconditional participation in National Service, the complete absence of any organised fight, either inside or outside Parliament, for the demands of the workers on the home front.

The whole aim of the strategy of the Labour leaders at Southport was to cover up this reality, to create a fictitious picture of optimism, of "forward to victory." That was why they adopted the slogan "They Conquer Who Believe They Can"; why Bevin declared "We are nearer to power than ever before"; why Greenwood closed the Conference with the stirring call: "Soldiers! To your places!" That was why they attacked the Left for its alleged "defeatism," accused them of "wanting to water down Labour's principles," of undertaking "a desperate search for all kinds of doubtful allies."

No serious-minded Labour man or woman can afford to be taken in by this phrase-mongering. Our daily life is the ever-present proof that the actual position is entirely different. We Communists would be only too delighted if this were not so, for then there would be a different relation of class forces, permitting us to tackle different tasks. The realities of the situation are not to be grasped by the use of cheap easy catch-phrases about optimism and power, which are only irresponsible froth which it is nothing less than criminal for a serious political leadership to indulge in at such a moment.

Yes! We want victory. We want it now! We work night and day to bring it about. But are our forces ready? Are we prepared? Have we that clearness of policy, that confidence in the leadership, that boundless enthusiasm, that mass response which indicates both organised Labour and the masses of the people as yet outside the Labour movement responding to the call and streaming to Labour's banner?

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Look at the by-election results, the falling membership of the Labour Party, its serious financial position, the opposition of the Trade Unions to paying increased affiliation fees, the widespread and openly expressed disgust with the *Daily Herald*, the half-filled meetings, the absence of life and activity in some of the local Labour Parties ! These are the real facts which all the grandiose " optimism " of speeches which strike no genuine note cannot wipe away. And to pretend that they do not exist and are not growing is to weaken any chances of a Labour victory.

What is, at bottom, responsible for these facts ? *It is the lack of fight against the National Government.* No worker wants to take part in shadow boxing; he wants to fight to win, to be able to give heavier blows than his class enemy can give; he wants the leadership and organisation of the fight to be sound, confident, and every trick, tactic and ounce of strength brought into the fight.

It is the present pretence of fighting which gives the whole impression of insincerity and shadow boxing which is at the root of the crisis in the Labour Party to-day.

The organisation of this fight is the test of political leadership to-day. Once it is organised, once the shadow boxing has ceased, then not only the organised workers, but the mass of the people will respond. How the people rallied round A. J. Cook in 1926; the fight against the U.A.B. Regulations and the Hoare-Laval Pact in 1935; the Unity Campaign in 1937; Aid for Spain 1936-39 ! It was a united fight in which the issues were clear, and the people knew clearly who they were fighting, and why.

Mass support is won, allies are won, on the basis of clearly defined aims and methods of struggle, and it is the responsibility of working class leaders who control the powerful mass organisations to give this leadership.

This the Southport Conference did not give. What it did was to reject unity and a fighting policy, and the result can do no other than strengthen Chamberlain.

This fact, and the danger arising from it, has since been understood by those Labour leaders like Herbert Morrison, M.P., and John Marchbank, who after using all their power and influence to prevent the unity of all the Labour and democratic forces being achieved, who were in the forefront of the propaganda that " Labour can win on its own," now are compelled to go out of their way to win the support of Liberals and Tories.

These Labour leaders know that any split in the anti-Chamberlain vote, any rival candidates, will not bring about the defeat of the Chamberlain Government, but they still refuse to adopt policies and methods which could for a certainty organise the defeat of Chamberlain.

Can any genuine Labour man or woman remain unperturbed at the thought of Britain and its people subjected to another five years of

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Chamberlain? For whatever manœuvres he is indulging in now—under pressure of mass opinion and revolt in his own Party—in connection with the Anglo-Soviet Pact, his basic line is a pro-fascist line, which is not changed by any agreement which he is compelled to conclude with the Soviet Union.

But the Southport Conference was not clear on this point. The utmost confusion was shown in the conflicting views expressed on the three main issues discussed.

Take first the resolution on Foreign Policy. The resolution correctly places in the forefront the need for a Pact of Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union. It correctly criticises the past policy of the National Government and its abandonment of collective security. But the decisive issue for the present leadership of the fight against the National Government is missing, that is, the exposure of the present policy which the Government is pursuing under cover of an alleged return to collective security. Instead, official Labour expression solemnly claims that the Government has had now to adopt Labour's policy, thus giving the stamp of Labour approval to the Government's policy, and nullifying the effect of any abstract statement of correct principles.

The Government's whole conduct of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, the original attempted exclusion of the Soviet Union, the protracted refusal of any Mutual Pact, and then the successive attempts to nullify any Mutual Pact by loopholes to make it ineffective, no less than the simultaneous positive steps of the Government, in respect of the Czech gold for Hitler, or approval of the retention of Italian arms in Spain, and moves for a deal over Danzig, sufficiently show where its real policy is tending—that the basic aims of Munich are not abandoned.

So far from leading the fight against this dangerous policy, the Labour Party leadership at Southport sought to cover it up and even to assist its extension.

Thus, Noel Baker, Labour's foreign "expert" made the statement: "Appeasement is not a policy, it is a dangerous pathological complaint." Such a statement can only encourage the illusion that Chamberlain is a weak old man who does not realise the implications of what he is doing. It glosses over the fact, which needs to be dragged out into the light of day that Chamberlain represents the British millionaire group which wants fascism as a bulwark against the working class, which looks with envy at the way in which German fascism has enabled the German industrialists and financiers to pile up wealth at the expense of the general mass of the people. Appeasement *is* a policy—a policy deliberately aimed at making fascism stronger. What effect can the "appeasing" of fascism by the handing over of £6,000,000 worth of Czech gold have, other than to strengthen it by enabling it to buy more materials for armament production?

But far more alarming than this even, was the intervention, in the debate, of Mr. Bevin.

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Mr. Bevin spoke " to fill a gap in Labour's foreign policy."

Mr. Bevin's line is a direct continuation of the Munich policy. It was a try-out at Southport of the policy of the Cliveden Set and the pro-fascist Chamberlain Government. It was in line with the similar proposals made by Paul Faure, Secretary of the French Socialist Party at the Nantes Congress meeting during the same time as the Labour Party Conference, and everybody in France knows that Faure is the spokesman inside the French Socialist Party of the notorious Flandin.

It is indicative that the Nazi Press has not been slow to realise that the Bevin-Faure group gives fascism very considerable help, as witness the comments that were made on the Nantes and Southport Conferences.

Karl Megerle, diplomatic correspondent of the *Berliner Börsen Zeitung*, organ of the most reactionary circles of Nazi Germany, writes :

> Interesting in these two Congresses, was the drive to point out that anti-fascism is not a policy and that one day its home and foreign consequencies may spell ruin. Especially at the Nantes Congress, the Paul Faure group tried for the second time to get away from the anti-fascist obsession. It admitted that the economic policy of the totalitarian States certainly does not serve capitalism, that the Fuehrer's speech of April 28 expressed reasonable ideas, that Germany is driven to expand its economic structure and that the slogans " Fascism or War," " Slavery or Death," are just mischief-making. Maintenance of peace must be placed above everything else even at the cost of an agreement with the totalitarian States. There is always talk about armaments but never about negotiations with Hitler. Similar ideas were heard at Southport.
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> We can also understand Trade Union Leader Bevin when he tries to prevent the Labour Party being dragged into a war for the London, Amsterdam and New York Stock Exchanges, because just as in 1914 it is not a question of democracy, freedom and justice but of Egypt, Irak and petrol. Only we don't believe that the Labour Party has any chance of coming to power as long as it pursues such a narrow foreign policy so contrary to its custom and interests that it no longer represents its own policy.

Herr Megerle concludes by calling on British and French Socialist leaders to take up the struggle against " Chauvinists, capitalists and Bolsheviks " which will give them the best platform on home and foreign policy.

The essence of Mr. Bevin's proposal is to " pool the great resources of the world " and offer Germany, Italy and Japan " a place in the sun." This sounds very statesmanlike and generous. Actually, it represents the formal introduction of Labour into the firm of Appeasement Ltd., with its particularly dangerous form of appeasement officially carried out on behalf of fascism by the Labour movement.

The colonial peoples are not so many bundles to be handed over from one ruling country to another without their acquiescence. The transfer of colonies from Britain or France to Germany or Italy will

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not give the Colonial peoples any greater measure of freedom, but on the contrary more brutal oppression. Can we for one moment believe that such a transfer would satisfy the fascist rulers ? Was Italy satisfied with the conquest of Abyssinia ? No ! Mussolini went on to Spain. Was Germany satisfied with the absorption of Austria and the Sudetenland ? No ! Hitler went on to annex the whole of Czechoslovakia and is now surveying Europe in preparation for pouncing on the next victim. The alleged " economic need " of colonies is not the need of the masses of the people in the fascist countries who in fact would suffer still more hardship through increased taxation for more armaments to " defend their colonies "; it is the desire of the very rich industrial and financial groupings who seek to increase their investments. The giving of " a place in the sun " to the fascist powers means strengthening their resources for war, just as giving them Austria and Czechoslovakia has strengthened them.

It is high time that the Labour leadership did pre-occupy itself more with the question of Colonies—not from the angle of appeasing fascism, but in order to lead the fight for a charter of rights for the Colonial peoples—adult suffrage, free education, freedom of speech, press and organisation, labour and social legislation—the fight against the cynical complacency expressed in Mr. Malcolm Macdonald's downright lying statement about the position of the people in Britain's colonies.

Now take the document on defence. This unquestionably represents a big advance. But again, words and deeds are two very different things.

The real test of the Labour leaders' attitude towards the democratisation of the Armed Forces is not what they say at Southport, but what they say outside the shipyards, aircraft factories, munition shops and in industry as a whole—what they do to spread Labour's policy *inside* the Armed Forces. Will they call mass meetings of the conscripted youth and the Territorials ? Will they spread literature far and wide explaining their demands ? Will they launch a broad campaign to popularise their policy ? Or will they be content with a few speeches in Parliament and the production of a penny pamphlet ? If ever there was an issue on which there must be no disparity between words and deeds, it is this issue of defence, for not only the present but the whole future advance towards Socialism and power is at stake.

Now take the question of the People's Front, with which is inseparably linked the Cripps Memorandum and the subsequent expulsion of Cripps and his most prominent supporters.

No genuine leader can feel very great satisfaction in a " victory " of this character, at a time when the dread of war permeates every home, when children are growing up in a " gas-mask " psychology.

It is true that, looking back over the campaign associated with the Cripps Memorandum, there was a weakness in that certain elements associated with it did tend to give the impression that preparations were being made for some kind of new party.

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No support for such an idea, however, can be found in the writings or speeches of Sir Stafford Cripps himself.

The inescapable fact is that Cripps *did want to fight and defeat Chamberlain now*. He did advance a policy which could enable this to be done, and no alternative policy was ever advanced by the Labour Party leaders. Instead, they took refuge in assertions that Cripps was "awkward," was "always making trouble," was "difficult to deal with," was "an individualist." This was all they could do, when they found themselves incapable of answering the fundamental truths contained in his Memorandum.

Southport has not killed the people's front. Let this be clearly understood. It is, in present conditions, the only policy which can guarantee to the people security to live in peace, can safeguard the democratic gains of the past and guarantee the future advance to Socialism.

Those who, like the *Daily Herald* leader writers, point so sneeringly to the so-called failure of the People's Front in France, Spain and Czechoslovakia, should have the elementary intelligence to remember two things; first, that its weakness in these countries was due almost entirely to the fact that a People's Front and Government have not been established in Britain, and secondly, that with all the weaknesses and mistakes of the People's Front in these countries, had it not been in existence the people of Britain would have already felt the effects of war on their bodies and in their homes.

The political aim of the People's Front still stands unchallenged—that in these days of fascist aggression, war, the destruction of democracy, culture and social progress, all those who seek, not to appease fascism, but to withstand and fight it, should come together in a common front to secure governments which give the guarantee that, on the basis of collective security abroad and social advance at home, peace and democracy may be preserved.

We unhesitatingly assert that in the conditions of to-day this is the best guarantee of winning Socialism in the future.

We understand the feelings of the older workers in the Labour Movement who grew up in the fight against the domination of Labour by the old Liberal Party, when it was the ruling party of capitalism; who fought a bitter struggle to secure the independence of Labour from the influence of Liberalism, and who now feel whenever the question of the People's Front is raised that it involves going back to the policies against which they fought.

But in fact, what we are fighting for is the real independence of Labour against those whose policy seeks to make Labour dependent upon the Chamberlain Government, which has replaced the old Liberal Party as the ruling party of monopoly capitalism.

It is independence of policy we want and have not yet really got. When we have real independence of policy as expressed in leading the

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mass struggle against the Chamberlain Government and its policies, then allies will be welcome and we shall seek to win the co-operation of all sections of the democratic forces and their organisations alongside Labour in the fight against monopoly capital.

The importance of the present surviving fraction of the old Liberal Party is no longer that of a ruling party of capitalism, but as an electoral-parliamentary expression of the small middle-class section of the population.

The fact that within the Liberal and Tory Parties opposition to Chamberlain is growing is not something to bemoan but to welcome and seize upon to use to Labour's advantage. The fact that Churchill and Lloyd George who once tried to crush the Russian Revolution, now believe that Britain will be crushed if it cannot secure a Pact with the Soviet Union is not a sign of weakening on the part of the Soviet Union, but of its strength and power.

One of the most significant facts in Britain to-day is the political wakening of millions of people of no party at all to their first understanding that something is radically wrong with society as it is organised at the present time. They include large numbers of professional people, small farmers and small shopkeepers and their families, whose interests are not at all bound up with monopoly capital. They are alarmed that poverty and unemployment appears to be insoluble. They are disquieted that cultural advance has stopped in so many countries which formerly contributed so much in this respect. They hate and fear war, and so now they are seeking which way to turn, whose lead to follow, what they can do.

They are not yet convinced of the Socialist solution. They resent the patronising "take-us-or-leave-us" attitude of the Labour leaders. They want to get rid of Chamberlain. They want peace and friendship with all nations. They do not want phrase-mongering demagogy and speculation as to what will happen in the dim and distant future. *They want to know what it is practical to do now.*

It is this great force in Britain that the Labour Party refuses to organise, because it can only see Lloyd George and Sir Archibald Sinclair. And the fact that the Labour Party refuses to organise these forces on the ground that this means making "uncertain alliances," means "a revival of Liberal-Labourism," is only the cover for carrying forward the old ways of capitulation to capitalism, using new methods to suit present circumstances.

It is clear that before any permanent change can be effected in the whole policy and rôle of the Labour Party, the whole question of leadership needs to be given urgent consideration.

Nothing more strikingly reveals the stagnancy in Transport House than the manner in which nominations for the Executive Committee of the Labour Party are obtained and the method of voting.

Here is the leadership of what ought to be the most powerful working-

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class organisation in the country, a leadership carefully selected on the basis of the best brains, experience and capacity for leadership that can be found. This is especially so to-day when, with all due respect to the problems tackled by the old pioneers, they are nothing compared to the complicated and difficult problems which face the movement to-day.

It is absolutely essential that before the next Labour Party Conference those members of Trade Union Executives who sincerely want to strengthen the Labour Party leadership should seriously study this problem and put forward for the Labour Party Executive new, virile personalities with political interest and understanding. This question should also be raised by the District Committees and Branches in those Unions—there are not many of them unfortunately—whose rules allow such matters to be discussed by the rank-and-file.

What is to be done

We suggest that the first thing that needs to be done by the whole Labour movement now is to create the will to fight, the will to unite all who want to fight the Chamberlain Government, and lay the certain basis for its defeat in any coming general election; to organise a gigantic political awakening throughout the Labour movement, a feeling of real confidence and strength that can lead to a revival of every form of mass activity and end once and for all the present backward slide that will certainly bring us to the same position as German Social Democracy brought the German people, unless it is checked.

The heart of the Labour movement is sound and anxious for the fight. It will at once respond to a lead, but it must be the kind of lead and policy which is in accord with the demands of the situation and the immediate needs of the masses. It must be a lead which not only advances the daily struggle against capitalism and the Chamberlain Government, but at the same time lays the basis for the advance towards the conquest of power and the establishment of Socialism.

But the entire future advance towards power and Socialism depends upon what is done *now* in this situation of such unparalleled gravity and urgency.

Once the full strength and power of Labour in its political parties, Trade Unions and Co-operative movement is exerted, a new government can come to power in Britain; but the full strength of Labour can only be exerted when it is united in one gigantic combination that unhesitatingly goes into action against Chamberlain and capitalism as a whole.

The policy to be worked out should be one that attracts every section of the population which is anxious to bring about improvements in social conditions, and to safeguard democracy and peace.

The Immediate Programme of the Labour Party contains many points which, if worked out more concretely in relation to the present situation, can serve as the basis for organising the mass action of the

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workers. We suggest that at the present moment, the main concentration has to be on such types of demands as the following:

(1) The Trade Unions should lead a united fight of all the trade unionists to secure wage increases, holidays with pay, shorter hours, and collective agreements to cover every factory and industry, with compulsory recognition by all employers of the trade unions and their right to be recognised as the negotiating body of the organised workers. Especially is this question of economic demands urgent in the mining, textile, railway and agricultural industries. The Labour Party should take full part in such a campaign, pledging its full support in the carrying through of all necessary legislation to improve the conditions of the industrial workers.

(2) The adoption of a large-scale national plan of economic development, involving re-housing, new hospitals, schools, clinics, water supply, re-afforestation, credits and mechanical aid for agriculture, land drainage and reclamation, re-equipment of backward industries, new roads, up-to-date methods of sanitation and lighting in every working class area. The construction of deep shelters for the civil population as protection against any potential air raids. The whole of this work to be carried out on the basis of trade union rates and conditions. Alongside this, the Government should be forced to organise the setting up of new industries and factories in the dis-distressed areas.

(3) A campaign for the abolition of the Means Test needs to be placed in the forefront of Labour's fighting programme, for as the unemployed are being absorbed in some areas, the wages they begin to earn are immediately taken into account to throw off benefit other members of their households still unemployed.

(4) No one can defend the scandal of the present scales for the Old Age Pensions; there must be an increase, for no one can justify the existing rates in a country which is spending £2,000 a minute on rearmament.

(5) A planned development of our national agricultural resources, to ensure a better life for the country workers and security for the farmers; guaranteed prices for farm products based on the cost of production; control of the profits made by middlemen, manufacturers and combines, in order to protect the interests of agriculture and prevent profiteering in food at the expense of the working people.

(6) The mass strikes now taking place all over the country reveal the fact that the Rent question is now right in the forefront of all the vital domestic issues. The Labour Party and Trade Unions should at once co-ordinate and lead all these movements against exhorbitant Rents, and ceaselessly campaign for the restoration and extension of Rent Control measures, the scaling down of municipal rents with larger State grants, and the protection of those workers who have been compelled to enter into contracts for the purchase of houses.

(7) An end must be made to profit-making out of the nation's needs, and in this connection there should be a revival on a large scale of the demand for the nationalisation of the arms industry.

(8) The position of the young people should now receive the utmost attention from the adult Labour movement. Never were the problems of the youth recognised as they are to-day, thanks to the un-

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remitting work of the various youth organisations. The Youth Charter adopted by the Trades Union Congress is one that can no longer be allowed to remain a dead letter; life, action and enthusiasm must be put into the fight for its achievement.

(9) The fulfilment of all these demands will of course take money, but the people have now set before their eyes the fact that there *is* money in Britain. In the last analysis it is, of course, true that the whole burden falls upon the workers, that is why the demand "Make the Rich Pay" must now be voiced as never before. The Nuffield class who make such advertisement of their wealth, acquired through the exploitation of the workers, can no longer be allowed to dictate how that wealth shall be spent; it is the responsibility of the people who create it to decide this and enforce it.

(10) The defence policy of the Labour Party should be popularised far and wide—in the factories, the trade unions, in the armed forces, in Parliament, and the local and county councils. The workers in the armed forces must be made to feel they are not isolated from the Labour movement; their full political rights as well as their economic conditions and chances of promotion must be safeguarded. Contact should be kept with all the conscripts, literature sent them, lectures and educational studies arranged for them. Practical meaning should be given to all the talk about the democratisation of the armed forces and the various auxiliary organisations for civil defence.

(11) The Air Raid Precaution plans must be based on the most effective basis, that gives the best defensive measures that scientific planning, construction and political direction can give. We suggest that the four main points in any such A.R.P. plans should have the following as their basis:

(a) Completely bomb-proof and gas-proof shelters for all people in towns and large villages, including shelters in streets and railway stations. Splinter-proof protection for those in isolated houses.

(b) Planned evacuation and reception for children up to 14, for mothers of children up to two, for expectant mothers, the old, the sick, and the infirm. Survey of billets by teachers beforehand.

(c) A planned casualty and medical service, based on bomb-proof and gas-proof hospitals in towns, and properly protected base hospitals in the relatively safe zones of the country.

(d) Democratic control of the whole A.R.P. service built up round the Local Authorities.

(12) In these days when so much is being said about the problems of the Colonies and the more equitable distribution of the raw materials and resources, we need to remember that our first and primary duty is to the peoples of the British Empire. We must boldly advance our plans for the granting of immediate democratic reforms to the colonial peoples, coupled with economic assistance to the least developed countries, and the granting to Ireland and India the full independence claimed by their people, and on which alone can be built a permanent mutual confidence and economic co-operation between the peoples of the British Empire.

(13) The whole campaign for the building up of the Peace Front and the carrying through of Staff conversations, in the first place between the British, French and Soviet High Commands, must be intensified.

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The building up of such an alliance also places serious responsibilities on the British people; these they will fulfil without question when they have a government they can trust, one that believes in social advance, in democracy and peace. Then they will be ready to organise the man power, the armaments and financial resources that are necessary to defend the peace of the world, alongside other democratic states.

How shall the campaign for the fulfilment of such a programme be carried out?

By the mobilisation of every resource of the Labour movement. By the organisation of the greatest series of mass demonstrations, conferences, leaflet and pamphlet distribution, use of the radio and cinema, utilisation of the willing service of every speaker, writer, singer, artist and dramatist the Movement can draw in. The whole country can be made to sit up and take notice. The Market Squares and Halls, the factory gates, the Trades Councils, can all be filled with enthusiastic workers eager and anxious to embark on Labour's greatest campaign.

The basis can be laid for certain victory at any General Election, the way prepared to avoid a split in the anti-Chamberlain vote all over the country.

It is of particular importance that those parts of the programme which relate to municipal affairs—housing and rents, hospitals, schools, A.R.P. shelters, etc.—should be worked out locally and made the bases for a really popular campaign that can bring sensational Labour victories in the November municipal elections.

In the course of the campaign, forms of united action can be developed which will have lasting results in strengthening the whole Labour movement. Bonds of international solidarity can be forged in a new way, and international working class unity established.

This great aim will not only render the greatest service to the democratic people of all lands, it will provide the greatest impetus to the organisation of the mass opposition to the fascist dictators in their own countries, for the German and Italian peoples will no longer feel isolated and cut off; they will not be subject to the powerful propaganda alleging their encirclement for hostile aims, for they will know that this great campaign is aimed at defending them as well as ourselves.

The fight to achieve this line of policy being carried through now, seems to us to be the principal task of all those in the Labour movement who are anxious that Labour should fulfil its responsibilities to its own members and the British people.

But it cannot be done without the most persistent and painstaking campaigning inside the Movement, by a fight against defeatism; recognising that Southport has not settled all the big controversial issues of policy and that it is not true that nothing now remains but to accept the position after Southport "with good grace," and wait another three years before these issues can come up again for

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discussion.

Such a standpoint can only lead to a worsening of the present disastrous position inside the Labour Party. Against this the sharpest possible fight within the Movement needs to take place, so that an immediate positive and practical line of struggle against capitalism and the Chamberlain Government can be carried out.

For the blunt truth is that on its present basis and policy the Labour Party cannot successfully organise the type of mass campaign which is now required. Every campaign it has attempted to organise during these last years proves this. The response from its own membership has not come, there has been no heart, no burning enthusiasm, no sustained drive, no confident leadership, inspiring, rousing and stimulating the whole drive forward.

The reason for this is to be found in the policy of suppression and exclusion of genuine sections of the working class movement from the Labour Party. The forces that could help to change the situation are deliberately excluded, because certain of the reactionary Labour leaders do not want struggle and fight, but passivity and co-operation with capitalism. It is this artificial separation of the working class forces that leads to the present paralysis in the Labour Party and prevents what campaigns it does organise from producing the desired results. This is why the fight for working class unity after Southport has to be taken up inside the Labour Party in a more vigorous way than ever before, why every form of local co-operation on the part of all working-class bodies has to be organised, so that the basis for the unity of all the forces of the Labour Movement on a national and international scale can be laid in the shortest possible time.

This is why the Communist Party expresses its readiness to throw all its strength, forces, organisers, speakers and press into any campaign the Labour Party will lead for the aims set out in this article, as the way forward in the present situation.

If this were done, there could be an immediate all-round strengthening of the Labour Party, Trade Union and Co-operative Movement; life and experience would prove that the work of the Communist Party is indispensable to any future growth of the Labour Party and it would be accepted as an affiliated organisation to the Labour Party.

With this would come a real drive for socialist understanding. For despite the formal acceptance of Socialism, neither the leadership nor the majority of the membership of the Labour Party is fully Socialist conscious, linking up the day-to-day struggle against capitalism with the drive towards the actual conquest of power.

If it were, there would be a very different situation in this country. In many respects the Labour Party is still Liberal-Labour in outlook, screened by formal independence of the Liberal and Tory Parties, but with a leadership which is not fully independent of capitalist policy.

The Southport Conference has only emphasised the urgent need

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for a deep process of Socialist education and awakening to be carried through the Labour Party alongside such a campaign as we have suggested. The whole basis of capitalist society needs to be explained, our Socialist principles and solution popularised, the people urged to study and discuss, to become acquainted with the classic works of Marxism-Leninism, to study the history of the Soviet people.

Then we shall see such a political upsurge as Britain has never seen before. The whole Labour movement will take on a more serious, informed character; there will be an end to opportunism and reaction within the Movement; the defence of the present interests of the workers will be related to their future interests as well, and will in this way not only guarantee success in the daily struggle against capitalism, but lay the certain basis for the advance to Socialism.

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The Anglo-Soviet Negotiations

BY R. F. ANDREWS

ON MAY 27, THE British and French Ambassadors in Moscow submitted to the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs the seven-clause draft of a treaty of mutual assistance between Great Britain, France and the U.S.S.R. Less than a week later, Molotov handed to them a Soviet counter-draft, also in the form of a treaty, embodying a number of amendments to the Anglo-French text. On June 12, a Foreign Office official, Mr. William Strang, left London by air for Moscow, in order to assist in negotiations for an agreed text.

These facts have not as yet resulted, at the time of writing, in an agreement. But they are of considerable importance in themselves. They show that, in spite of every resistance and manœuvre, the National Government has been pushed to the brink of a decision to form a "peace alliance" embodying the three great Powers whose interests do not lie in the direction of war.

It is essential to take stock of the situation which has produced this result, whether an agreement is signed or not. Does it represent any fundamental change in the policy of the National Government? If so, why has this change taken place? What effect must such a change have upon the general situation? These are questions which many are asking, and which must be answered, whatever the outcome of the present negotiations.

What has been the foreign policy of the National Government? The foretaste came when Japan invaded Manchuria in September, 1931, and the British Government decided to "let well alone" by ignoring this threat to its own interests in China, and its legal obligations under the League Covenant. This was the first step in the policy of appeasement, which only developed to its full as the years went on.

The policy took shape finally after Hitler had come to power, and more particularly when Germany left the League and the Disarmament Conference in October, 1933. What were the elements of the National Government's foreign policy from then onwards?

First, to strengthen the Nazi régime in Germany—as a barrier to Communism in the most advanced industrial country of Europe, as a counter-balancing force to France on the European continent, and as a possible spearhead of attack on the Soviet Union. It was in the prosecution of these aims that the National Government facilitated short term credits to Germany, and the large purchases of raw materials by German trading organisations which made possible

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German rearmament. For the same reason, the National Government restrained France from preventive action against Germany in 1933, and again after the German occupation of the Rhineland in 1936. A by-product of the policy of destroying French hegemony in Europe—and thereby making France a subservient client of Great Britain—was the refusal to prosecute sanctions against Italy during the Abyssinian war, which might have meant the overthrow of Mussolini and the Fascist régime in Italy. It was for the same purpose of encouraging the Nazi régime that the National Government, all through 1934 and the greater part of 1935, threw cold water on the various schemes for regional pacts of mutual assistance in eastern and central Europe, which might have checked German expansion at an early stage.

Secondly, National Government policy was to continue appeasing the appetites of Nazi Germany, and of the allies whom its success inevitably attracted, even when these diplomatic, political and military preparations developed to the stage of open aggression. Successively, Spain was sacrificed in 1936, China (at least in intention) in 1937, Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938. All these "sacrifices," of course, were at the expense of others, not of the British Empire. Strategical positions, it is true, were lost should a future war turn the aggressor "Axis" against Great Britain, but not an inch of British territory. The National Government did not display the slightest intention of giving up the British Empire, and indeed no capitalist class has yet been known which gives up even a penny on wages, let alone an Empire, without a struggle—save in face of the most overwhelming odds. On the contrary, the National Government during this second period began to rearm with increasing momentum. Whether it had said so to itself or not, the effect of this phase of its policy was to gain time for rearmament, while egging on Hitler on every possible occasion (particularly during the wars in Spain and China) against the U.S.S.R.

For this was a third feature of National Government policy—to encourage Germany and Japan to lock themselves in deathgrips with the U.S.S.R., when the moment came that their expansive appetites could be restrained no longer, or rather could be appeased no longer by such small fry as Czechoslovakia or Northern China. This aim spoke very clearly from Lord Londonderry's diary of his relations as Air Minister with the Nazi leaders. It was continually voiced during the Spanish War. It was sounded by pathetic appeals of the *Times* to Japan, again and again during the Chinese war, to remember that whoever was incapacitated by a struggle with China could not possibly pretend to be the watchdog against Bolshevism in the Far East. There spoke, in all this, one fateful consequence of the long hegemony and pre-eminence of British finance-capital—class-blindness where a Socialist State was concerned. The more resolute and reactionary the representatives of British Big Business—and only such were recruited to the

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National Government in 1931—the less capable they were of grasping that " Reds," " agitators," " demagogues," " Marxist fanatics " and above all, men who did not wear striped trousers, or at least an old school tie, could organise the fortunes of a very great people on non-capitalist lines, in such a way as to be a terror to any venturesome aggressor. Faced with the alternative of attacking Bolshevik Russia or the mighty British Empire, it seemed a matter of course that Hitler would choose the U.S.S.R.

This calculation might have proved correct, but for one mischance : under Stalin's leadership and with the help of the Five Year Plans, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet nations built up their strength to the level worthy of a Great Power much faster than Hitler, without his internal contradictions. This upset the National Government's scheme. For Lord Londonderry was already recording in 1935, and subsequent events have proved beyond a shadow of doubt, that Hitler and his allies here displayed increasing distaste for the prospect of a challenge to the U.S.S.R., and an increasing inclination to look elsewhere, even though this might lead to a war with Britain and France.

With the betrayal of Czechoslovakia at Munich, on September 30, 1938, a critical point was reached. All the British capitalists were not as convinced of the correctness of the National Government's calculations as it was itself—probably just because they had not borne the responsibility for applying the policy of encouraging Hitler between 1933 and 1938. More and more began to see the immense strategical advantages already gained by the Fascist bloc all over the world, and, after the thorough drubbing received by the Japanese at Changkufeng (August, 1938), to doubt whether the U.S.S.R. was in any danger. Dominions whose connection with Great Britain depends in the long run on confidence in its protection began to be alarmed. United States opinion, already disturbed by the National Government's support of Japan during the first twelve months of the present war on China, saw the aggressor bloc moving to the position in which it might extend its operations to the New World. This aroused hostility to British policy greater than at any time since the war. Finally, the appetites of the Axis itself showed signs of rapid expansion.

It will be noted that a revolt by the Labour Party is not included in these factors. While the British people at large, and the rank-and-file of the Labour movement no less, showed increasing disquiet at Chamberlain's policy all through the winter of 1938-39, the National Government could still have been continuing the policy of appeasement, had its fate depended on the activities of the Labour Party machine. Riddled with bleating pacifism, venomous in its hatred only of Communists, prepared to turn even its demand for an Anglo-Soviet pact into an object of ridicule, by the virulence with which its leaders opposed co-operation between the International Federation

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of Trade Unions and the Soviet trade unions, the official machinery of British Labour—the executives, the M.P.s, the trade union leaders—was, except for an honourable but small minority, an asset in Chamberlain's hand rather than an obstacle to his policy.

This is the background on which the Anglo-Soviet negotiations have to be seen, if their importance is to be properly evaluated. They have expressed the growing realisation of the British people that a deadly menace to its very existence has been created by Chamberlain's policy. They also represent the tardy attempt by Chamberlain himself to avoid bearing responsibility for this disastrous situation—an attempt itself made possible only by the refusal of the Labour Party leaders to raise the nation against him. Naturally, therefore, the negotiations themselves have borne a double character, with one step back after every two steps forward, as the acute contradictions created by the previous phases of National Government policy made themselves felt.

The negotiations fall into four stages—up to March 17, 1939, from March 18 to April 13, from April 15 to May 19, and from May 27 onwards.

The first stage, paradoxically enough, is that in which there were no negotiations, and in which policy of appeasement was having its last open fling of hostility to the very idea of co-operation with the U.S.S.R., when objective conditions had moved past the stage at which such a policy was tolerable to British finance-capital itself. Early in March, there was already circumstancial evidence that German troops were being concentrated all round the Czechoslovak border; but these reports were ignored. On March 9, the Prime Minister gave a notorious "sunshine talk," about the prospects of peace in every direction, which flooded the daily newspapers the next morning, and on Sunday, March 12. Stalin's speech at the opening of the 18th Congress of the C.P.S.U., which gave a searching and caustic analysis of the international situation and of the policy of appeasement, was virtually suppressed by the British newspapers to make room for this tide of false information. When German agents were already in revolt in Slovakia, Mr. Chamberlain (March 14) told Parliament that no aggression had yet taken place. When Czechoslovakia was over-run by German troops the next day, Mr. Chamberlain would not admit that Hitler had broken faith. The economic ultimatum presented by Germany to the Roumanian Government the next day was concealed from the British public. And only a plain warning of revolt by the Conservative M.P.s (March 17) induced the Prime Minister, in his speech at Birmingham that evening, to denounce the peril of aggression for the first time in comparatively intelligible terms, and to hint that Britain would have to consult with the Dominions, with France and "with others." The next day, the British Ambassador in Moscow enquired what the Soviet Government's attitude was, in view of the threat to Roumania.

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Thus, the first approach to the Soviet Union of any kind was bought at the price of the enslavement of Czechoslovakia, a direct threat to Roumania, and a Tory revolt against Chamberlain.

The second phase began with Litvinov's reply the same day: a proposal for a " consultation " of six foreign ministers (British, French, Soviet, Roumanian, Polish and Turkish) at Bucharest, to discuss what effective measures could be taken immediately. From the character of the proposals made by the U.S.S.R. in similar circumstances in March, 1938 (after the seizure of Austria) and September, 1938 (when Czechoslovakia was threatened), the National Government knew what the U.S.S.R. would propose—a pledge of mutual assistance against aggression, backed up by staff arrangements. It would not tolerate this. Lord Halifax told Maisky in London next day (March 19) that the suggestion was " premature." Instead, the National Government suggested a joint declaration by Britain, France, U.S.S.R. and Poland, condemning aggression. But while breaking publicly with Germany in this way, the declaration only pledged " consultations," should aggression be repeated in the future. This was as good as nothing at all, since the National Government knew beforehand that the Polish Government would not under any circumstances sign such a toothless, and therefore dangerous document. So it proved; although the U.S.S.R. accepted the declaration, for want of a better, nothing more was heard of it. But by the end of that week (March 24) Germany had taken Memel from Lithuania, and imposed an unequal economic treaty on Roumania. To appease public opinion, the National Government undertook negotiations with Poland, which led first to a British guarantee (March 31) and then to an Anglo-Polish pledge of mutual assistance (April 6). Public opinion, concerned at the obvious futility of such arrangements without close co-operation with the U.S.S.R.—the only great Power able to render immediate help to Poland—was fobbed off with lying assurances that " close contact " was being maintained with the Soviet Government. In reality the U.S.S.R., on both the dates above-mentioned, was only informed after the event. Once again Mr. Chamberlain put up the signal that all was well on the international map, by going away on holiday (April 7); and the next day Italy seized Albania. The fruits of this second phase of the contradictory approach to the U.S.S.R. were manifest—and they became still more so when, on April 13, the Prime Minister had to announce that the National Government was giving further guarantees, this time to Greece and Roumania. Violent attacks on the Government in the House of Commons and the House of Lords forced its spokesmen to repeat a grudging admission of the need for co-operation with the U.S.S.R., and finally, through the mouth of Sir John Simon, to admit even the possibility of a triple military understanding against aggression.

Thus, in the second phase of the negotiations, the British Government for the first time admitted the possibility of at least a joint declara-

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tion with the U.S.S.R. against aggression. But it was unwillingly pushed into the third phase—of readiness to co-operate in actual resistance to aggression—only at the price of the seizure of Memel, a big step towards the economic enslavement of Roumania, the annexation of Albania, and a new active or passive Tory revolt in Parliament.

The third phase began. Chamberlain had left Britain with three guarantees round her neck, and no way of making them effective. On April 15, the British Ambassador in Moscow asked the Soviet Government to make them effective, by giving a unilateral guarantee on its part to Poland and Roumania likewise. Thus the British Government was now willing that Soviet blood should be shed with that of the British people; but in sectors of its own choosing, at times and on occasions likewise of its own choosing. The Soviet Government replied on April 16 with its counter proposals : a triple mutual assistance pact between Britain, France and the U.S.S.R., military conversations to arrange for its proper fulfilment, and a guarantee to the small States of Eastern Europe, menaced by German aggression. Although the British Press trumpeted aloud that a " Grand Alliance " was under consideration, the National Government concealed the proposals of both sides; it was left to a *Tass* communiqué of May 9, and to an *Izvestia* editorial of May 11, to reveal them—as well as the fact that on May 7 the National Government had rejected the Soviet proposals, and was insisting on its own. The National Government had in the meantime, however, been unable to conceal another fact—a new pitiful attempt at appeasement. On April 23 the British Ambassador, recalled after the seizure of Czechoslovakia, was suddenly sent back to Berlin, where he appealed in vain to be received by Ribbentrop. Mr. Chamberlain announced the introduction of a measure of conscription on April 24, but on April 26 made a speech pleading with Hitler for an agreement. Hitler's only reply was an insulting speech on April 28, announcing the end of the Anglo-German Naval Treaty and of the German-Polish Treaty of Friendship. This miserable failure did not prevent the National Government, as already mentioned, rejecting the Soviet proposals for a real front against aggression on May 7, and for a second time on May 17. Again it put forward its demand for a Soviet unilateral guarantee to the States selected by Mr. Chamberlain for protection. Two days later, Maisky conveyed to Lord Halifax the Soviet Government's rejection of this proposal, and its insistence on its own scheme—which for the first time received considerable publicity in that morning's newspapers. The result was an attack on the Government's attitude in the House of Commons that afternoon, on a scale yet unknown—from Attlee to Eden, with most of the Tory M.P.s sitting in uncomfortable silence. It was from that moment clear that any further progress in the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, and consequently in the formation of a genuine peace front, must come through acceptance of the Soviet demand for full

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reciprocity as between the three Great Powers.

Thus the third phase passed into the fourth—the phase of negotiations about a direct triple pact of mutual assistance—only at the price of a further month's delay, a new attempt at appeasement, two new blows to European security by the tearing up of the treaties above-mentioned, and a third Tory revolt against Chamberlain.

After much humming and hawing, conversations in Paris between Lord Halifax and MM. Daladier and Bonnet, non-committal talks with Maisky in Geneva and ambiguous statements by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons on May 24, the British and French Ambassadors in Moscow presented on May 27 the first draft of a real treaty of mutual assistance. Three obvious flaws were pointed out to them, both in Moscow and in London. The draft provided for mutual assistance in conformity with the procedure laid down in Article 16 of the League Covenant. This, experience had shown, meant interminable delays in any case; but coming from Governments who, in September, 1938, had demanded the whittling down of this very clause into nothingness (at the League Assembly in Geneva), it was more than suspect. Secondly, the draft made no provision for immediate military consultations and their rapid termination. The history of the vain Soviet efforts to secure staff talks about help to Czechoslovakia, in 1938, was a sufficient warning against such vagueness. Thirdly, the draft was couched in such a way that it provided for help to the Baltic States only if they asked for it. Thus Mr. Chamberlain's obstinate insistence that only those States would receive a joint guarantee on whom he had chosen to confer that blessing still made itself felt. The Soviet Government refused to accept such discrimination. The Baltic States might well be afraid to apply for such a guarantee before a Treaty was signed, in face of German threats; even were they not wholly or partially ruled by Fascists and pro-Nazis, who might already be acting the part of a "Fifth Column" on Hitler's behalf. These points were made clear by Molotov in his speech to the Supreme Council on May 31, and in the Soviet Press. Soviet counter-proposals, in the shape of an amended text of the Anglo-French draft, were handed to the Ambassadors two days later. After pondering on them for a week, and organising considerable Press propaganda to justify its refusal of a guarantee to the Baltic States, the National Government realised that nothing would move the Soviet Government from its minimum conditions for a genuine peace front, and sent Mr. Strang to Moscow.

At the time of writing, we cannot tell whether this is the last phase of the negotiations, or whether there is to be another tale of opportunity missed. One thing is certain, that the weeks of delay since May 19 have already encouraged the Fascist Axis to prepare new acts of violence—Germany to concentrate huge armed forces around the frontiers of Poland, and Japan to move dangerously near an open conflict with Britain in China.

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It is certain, however, that a triple pact is now possible. It should be equally obvious to the reader that that pact will come, if it does, only in the teeth of Chamberlain's resistance, and not by a planned calculation on the part of British Imperialism. On the contrary, it will come, if at all, because of the latter's miscalculation—the one we have referred to earlier—and because of a realisation that Britain is in greater danger than the U.S.S.R., and Britain needs Soviet help more than the U.S.S.R. needs British help. It must be obvious, consequently, that even if Chamberlain takes this step, and even if he should be replaced by someone less tarred with the brush of appeasement, the danger that British Imperialism will betray the pact, when its ends have been served, will remain.

Yet is the pact worth signing, ought the British workers to support it, can it be of any positive value? The reluctance of Chamberlain even to consider it, his frenzied resistance to its consummation, should point to the answer. The signature of such a pact would be a defeat for the most reactionary elements of British finance-capital—those who for six years have supported Hitler and Mussolini. By creating the threat of overwhelming force against any further aggressive move of the Fascist Axis, it would be a blow to Hitler such as he has not received for years. The undermining of his prestige by the cessation of his long series of unopposed victories, and the turning-in of the gaze of the German people upon their own pressing needs, would be an historic turning-point in the struggle for the freedom of the German people from the Nazi horror. The formation of the peace bloc would be of immense encouragement to the actual and potential victims of aggression, as the revival of the national movement in Czechoslovakia, in recent weeks, and the firmer front shown by Poland at even the hint of an Anglo-Soviet understanding, have shown. The signature of the pact would be a practical demonstration to the United States of a change in the policy which betrayed Manchuria in 1931, and would thereby create the first essential conditions for a turn by the U.S.A. to the policy of active co-operation with the peace forces of Europe.

The formation of a peace bloc, by a triple pact between the Great Powers, would not, of course, mean the end of the war danger, of imperialism, of the exploitation and oppression of the colonies, of the capitalist system. But nobody ever said that it would, and those new-baked " Marxists " and " revolutionaries " who, like the I.L.P. phrase-mongers and the Trotskyist scum, attack the pact on those grounds, are only thereby justifying once again the strong language we use about them. The pact, by defeating the war plans of the most reactionary and ruthless elements of international capitalism, would provide a breathing-space for the working-class forces and the forces of progress everywhere, and could be made the starting point, if it were immediately followed up, of a new fight to drive back the enemies of humanity still further.

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The Great French Revolution

BY ALLEN HUTT

"HERE AND NOW begins a new era in world history." The speaker was a young German, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, greatest poet his country has ever produced. The occasion was a September day in 1792 on the ridge overlooking the little French village of Valmy, a few kilometres west of the wet and wooded uplands of the Argonne; spellbound the German poet had seen the indefatigable charge of Prussia's veterans wilt and withdraw before the accurate and intense fire of the ragged army of revolutionary France. It was the first devastating check to the war of intervention by the feudal-monarchist reaction of Europe against the land of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. A hundred and fifty years later another German speaks a very different language. Herr Doktor Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda of the Third Reich, cries "we are expunging from history the year 1789."

The contrast of views is suggestive. To the man who more than any other symbolises German culture at its highest the victory of the French Revolution marked a new era in world history. To the Nazi boss the year when the French Revolution began is one to be struck out of the calendar. All the more reason for us to consider, on its 150th anniversary, what this Revolution was about and what it means to us to-day. It is high time English Socialists learnt and thought some more of those days

> When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared
> And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,
> Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free
>
> COLERIDGE.

For Goethe was right. A new era in world history *had* begun. After 1789 nothing was the same again. The world we inhabit, the Labour movement we work in, the Marxism that inspires and guides us, all variously stem from those tremendous days.

What was the main cause of the revolution? "The peasants and the whole country," answers Jaurès, "rose against the old order, not only because of the decline in agriculture, but also because that old order prevented the development of capitalism." Feudal agriculture had reduced the country to famine (a third of the land lay waste). National finances were in a condition of chronic crisis. Industry and trade had been rapidly developing; and the growth and consciousness of the bourgeoisie was reflected in the unprecedented Age of Enlightenment, when with Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot and the Encyclopedists bour-

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geois culture attained its greatest heights. France was the country in which the contradictions of a moribund feudalism had reached their sharpest point; and as the 1780's advanced it became clear that the prerequisites of revolution were present—the governing class could no longer govern in the old way, the people were no longer willing to be governed in the old way, and there were all the elements of a first-rate national crisis.

The officers and troops, led by Lafayette, who had fought as the allies of American democracy in the War of Independence, brought back to France the revolutionary ideas of the New World. The State was bankrupt. Drought in the summer of 1788 ruined the harvest and the following winter was the coldest for eighty years. Unrest, already general, became explosive. There were bread riots by the hundred. In desperation the monarchy convoked the States-General, an old feudal assembly, long since fallen into desuetude.

When this body assembled in Paris in May, 1789, it was at once evident that the monarchy could not treat it as the consultative feudal gathering it was supposed to be. The division into three orders or estates—nobility, clergy and commoners—meeting separately and voting by estate, did not correspond with reality. Only the higher nobility, centring on the Court, and the higher clergy (between them owning practically all the land of France) were interested in the maintenance of the old order. Many of the lesser and poorer nobles, and the parish priests, soon passed to the side of the Third Estate which, in June, despite royal hostility, declared itself the National Assembly with the right to levy taxes and swore not to adjourn till a Constitution had been agreed.

What was the relationship of class forces in these opening stages of the revolution and what distinction is there to be drawn between the aims and the driving forces of the revolution? Against the feudal monarchy and its noble-clerical basis "the bourgeoisie was the class that really stood at the head of the movement" (Marx: *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, December 11, 1848). But it was not the bourgeoisie that carried through to the end its own democratic revolution; that was the work of the people, the plebeian elements, led by the petty bourgeoisie. The driving forces of the revolution, that is to say, significantly came from the oppressed masses—the peasantry in the countryside, the small traders, the handicraftsmen, the artisans in the towns; but the aim of the revolution was bourgeois-democratic. In the article quoted above Marx went on:

> The proletariat and the sections of society which did not belong to the bourgeoisie as yet possessed no interests not coincident with those of the bourgeoisie, and were not as yet in process of development as independent classes or parts of classes. Consequently wherever, as in the France of 1793 to 1794, they clashed with the bourgeoisie, they were actually fighting for the interests of the bourgeoisie, although in a fashion different from that of the bourgeoisie itself. The reign of terror

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in France was nothing but the plebeian form of the struggle against the enemies of the bourgeoisie.

It was the action of the people that saved the revolution when it had hardly begun. In the early days of July, 1789, it was clear that the monarchy was preparing for a military coup against the National Assembly. Troops in large numbers under trusted royalist officers were being concentrated at Versailles. There were clashes in the streets of Paris, where the newly-constituted municipality (the Commune) was hastily arming a militia force. The alarm was sounded on July 13, and the next morning at nine o'clock, without waiting for the royal attack, " that anonymous person who had been left out of account, the people of Paris," took matters brusquely into its own hands. Cannon and muskets were taken from the Invalides and the fortress of the Bastille stormed.

The Bastille not only symbolised the oppression of the old order; it was the strategic key to the military domination of Paris. Its capture and razing put an end to any hopes of a successful royal coup against the Assembly and against Paris. With good reason *quatorze juillet* has since remained the supreme anniversary of the Revolution, the national fête day of the French Republic. And with good reason, too, three days after it had happened, did a deputation from the Faubourg St. Antoine say to the National Assembly, in demanding relief for the Parisian working-men who had lost time during the fighting : " Gentlemen, you are the saviours of the country, but you also have your saviours."

The taking of the Bastille set the whole country ablaze. As the news reached the villages the peasants rose. Chateaux, toll-gates, and the hated manorial records of customary dues and services were consigned to the flames. In the provincial towns municipalities were established and the citizens followed the example of Paris in establishing an armed militia or National Guard. The pressure of these events led the Assembly, which had now taken the title of Constituent, to proclaim, in its session of the night of August 4, the abolition of feudal privileges and feudal burdens, tithes, etc. But only the feudal obligations of personal service were abolished absolutely and without compensation; for the abolition of all other obligations, customary dues and so on, the lord was to be compensated by a money payment.

Thus the bourgeoisie in power—and in the Constituent Assembly it was the upper stratum of the bourgeoisie who enjoyed the dominant influence—were unwilling to carry through a radical solution of the peasant problem. They were prepared, as they shortly did, to confiscate Church lands and the lands of avowedly counter-revolutionary nobles; that was because the subsequent establishment of a State land fund enabled them to speculate in real estate, both directly and through manipulation of the bonds or *assignats* issued on the security of this fund; and so they could rapidly accumulate capital. But generally they

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were concerned to bring the revolution to a close. They did not desire a political system other than that of Constitutional Monarchy. Their aim was the sort of compromise aim, the establishment of the kind of *modus vivendi* with the relics of the old order, that had been achieved in England in 1688.

Yet still the people were the shock troops of the revolution. When, in October, 1789, the King refused to sign the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and royalist intrigues at Versailles assumed menacing proportions, a mass march of the women of Paris on Versailles forced the King to return to the Tuileries and to sign the most famous of all statements of bourgeois democracy. Let us, in passing, recall some of the Declaration's principal clauses :

I. Men are born, and always continue, free and equal in respect of their rights. . . .

II. The end of all political associations is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; and these rights are Liberty, Property, Security and Resistance of Oppression.

III. The Nation is essentially the source of all sovereignty; nor can any individual, or any body of men, be entitled to any authority which is not expressly derived from it.

XI. The unrestrained communication of thoughts and opinions being one of the most precious Rights of Man, every citizen may speak, write and publish freely, provided he is responsible for the abuse of this liberty, in cases determined by the law.

XII. A public force being necessary to give security to the Rights of Men and of citizens, that force is instituted for the benefit of the community and not for the particular benefit of the persons with whom it is intrusted.

The final clause (XVII.) emphasised that the " right to property " was " inviolable and sacred "; and that that last word of the Declaration was foremost in the mind of the reigning big bourgeoisie became ever clearer during the ensuing eighteen months. Desiring to keep labour cheap for rising capitalist industry the Assembly in 1791 voted unanimously the law drafted by deputy Le Chapelier forbidding the organisation of trade unions or any combination of workers in a trade. The Constitution of 1791 marked a big step back from the wide democratic asseverations of the Declaration; it was unashamedly a Constitution of the Rich. Citizens were divided into categories, active and passive. Only the first category were enfranchised; and the property and taxation qualifications for " active " citizenship were fixed so high that they included only some 42,000 out of a population of 26,000,000. When the King secretly fled to the frontier, in June of the same year, aiming to join the émigré nobles who, with their headquarters at Coblenz, were intriguing with the Austrians and Prussians to open a war of intervention, it was the popular forces who scotched the plot and brought the royal family back to Paris. There the people organised a massive demonstration to demand a republic. Held in the Champ de Mars on July 17 following, this demonstration was met by the declara-

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tion of martial law and was fired on by the National Guard under Lafayette's command; four hundred were killed and wounded; police persecutions rained on leading popular revolutionaries who had to flee Paris (like Danton) or go into hiding (like Marat).

But the Constituent Assembly, adjourning at the end of September, 1791, was mistaken if it thought it had brought the revolution to an end. Either the revolution would be carried through or counter-revolution, already feverishly organising on the frontiers and preparing civil war and intervention, would triumph. That question urgently faced the Constituent's successor, the Legislative Assembly, which met in October, and where the alignment of forces was somewhat different. The bourgeois majority was now dominated by the deputies of the Gironde, representing the merchant and manufacturing interests of the rich South-West; at the same time there was a solid minority of Jacobins, members of the leading political club of Paris, which took its name from the former monastery where it met. The Jacobins represented the Paris democracy, the petty bourgeoisie and working men of the capital. What now took place was the long battle between Girondins and Jacobins for the leadership of the revolution. In other words—who was to carry through the revolution and defend its conquests, the bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie?

The Jacobins took to heart the words of Marat, their outstanding publicist and political thinker (as well as most active and practical leader), when he said that "revolution is made and carried through by the lowest ranks of society, by workers, handicraftsmen, small shopkeepers, peasants, by the plebs, by the unfortunate, whom the shameless rich call the *canaille*" but that the revolution was turned by the upper classes to their own profit, since "the people made the mistake of not arming itself adequately." That mistake was not to be repeated. Jacobin leadership made Paris an armed citadel of the revolution. The year 1792 marked a turning point. In April the long-anticipated war against the European coalition and the émigrés opened and the military fortunes of revolutionary France were soon in a critical state. But among the people organisation and political activity were striding ahead. The most recent Socialist French historian (André Ribard) stresses that "the big social fact of 1792 was the permanence of political life." In its Clubs, like the Jacobins and the Cordeliers, in the 48 *sections* or wards into which it was divided, each with a constantly functioning Committee of Supervision (*comité de surveillance*), Paris gained the enthusiasm and conviction of mass political activity. The like was true of Marseilles and other centres, whence troops of picked volunteers (the *fédérés*) converged on the capital during the summer.

The world saw then for the first time on a grand scale how true nationalism, true *patriotism* (the very word originates with the Revolution) belongs to the people alone. It was they who rallied to the cry "the fatherland is in danger," when their former masters, fled to the

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standards of the anti-French coalition, drafted the violent and on-the-knees-dogs manifesto which was signed by the German generalissimo the Duke of Brunswick. Out of their struggle came France's first national anthem, the *Marseillaise.*

It was evident that the war could not be prosecuted with any hope of success unless accounts were settled with the monarchy, now the head and front of national betrayal. To this the Jacobins devoted their energies. The organ they employed was the Commune of Paris which, under the new and united pressure from below, had become a vastly different body from the municipality which ordained the massacre of the Champ de Mars. In the careful preparation of insurrection Danton showed himself a superb revolutionary tactician (" the greatest master of revolutionary policy the world has yet seen " wrote Engels in 1852) with his slogan *de l'audace, encore de l'audace et toujours de l'audace—et la France est sauvée!* On August 10, 1792 Paris rose, took the Tuileries by assault after bitter fighting, imprisoned the royal family and established the Republic, whose Year One was formally proclaimed the following month by the Convention, the new and democratically elected Assembly that the Paris insurrection had demanded.

While the Convention was being elected public tension became agonising as disaster succeeded disaster at the front. Longwy had capitulated, Verdun was on the point of falling. The tide of invasion was rolling onward without check. On September 2 there was a spontaneous outburst in Paris which led to the so-called September massacres. Parties went round the prisons and dealt out summary justice to some thousand persons. More ink has since been spilt over this episode than ever was blood during those September days. Here it would be superfluous to pursue the polemic; it will suffice to reproduce the contemporary comment of Thomas Jefferson, Father of American Democracy and principal author of the Declaration of Independence :

> Many guilty persons fell without the forms of trial, and with them some innocent. These I deplore as much as anybody. But—it was necessary to use the arm of the people, a machine not quite so blind as balls and bombs, but blind to a certain degree—was ever such a prize won with so little innocent blood ?

The troops hastening to the frontier were heartened by the knowledge that a searching blow had been dealt at the " Fifth Column "; and the victory of Valmy followed.

With August 10 and the meeting of the Convention on September 21 the Revolution entered its most critical period. The struggle between the Gironde and the Jacobins—whose fraction in the Convention were called the Mountain, from their seats on the top benches—began its more acute phase. These were the great days of Marat. The stocky and tough little doctor, steeled by persecution, showed through his daily *Ami du Peuple* how a newspaper could organise a revolutionary movement; correspondence, voicing plebeian grievances and demands,

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was a big feature, some three to four thousand letters appearing in its pages during its brief lifetime. He constantly urged the need for a dictatorship if the revolution was to be saved. He warned against the self-seeking and likely treachery of General Dumouriez, victor of Valmy, when succeeding triumphs had brought the latter to the height of popularity. But when military victory turned to defeat again in the spring of 1793 men realised that Marat and the Jacobins were right; and the defection of Dumouriez to the Austrians was the final blow to the Gironde. Once more the Commune of Paris, now led by the radicals who were called the *enragés* (Hébert, Chaumette, Anacharsis Clootz—the "orator of the human race"), served as the revolution's spearhead. At the turn of May and June the *sections* of Paris were called out, the Girondins driven from the Convention and their leaders arrested.

To the menace of the war of intervention civil war had already been added, with a counter-revolutionary rising in the west (the Vendée). Civil war now spread until it embraced over two-thirds of the departments of France. The Jacobins in power replied with dictatorship, exercised through the Committee of Public Safety, and terror; the revolutionary tribunal gave short shrift to the enemies of the people. At the same time the peasant problems was seriously tackled. On June 17 a decree finally and unconditionally emancipated the peasant from all feudal burdens without any compensation to the lord, returned communal lands to the villages, and facilitated the sale of State lands to the peasantry. As the political counterpart to this definitive blow at feudalism the Constitution of 1793 was drafted, based on universal suffrage and the plebiscite, and proclaiming that "society owes support to needy citizens; it provides them with work or secures to those incapable of work the means of existence." Maximum prices for grain and other essentials were fixed, and strong measures against speculation were adopted.

These measures saved France. While the first conscription, introduced by the Gironde in March, 1793, had produced only half the men anticipated, the levy *en masse* authorised by the Jacobin dictatorship in August "inundated France with soldiers" (Lord Acton). The genius of the engineer Carnot, "organiser of victory," coupled with the political education and leadership of the army through the delegates mandated by the Convention, gave France a democratic military machine which was to prove invincible.

Of the subsequent developments up to the fierce struggles which culminated in the bourgeois coup of 9 Thermidor (July 24), 1794, this introductory article cannot speak in detail.

Appropriately enough the last meteor-flash in the revolutionary firmament was a portent, a link between Jacobinism and Socialism. Gracchus Babeuf's Conspiracy of the Equals, and abortive rising of May, 1796, was inspired with Socialist ideas in embryo. "Down

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with private property in land" ran his Manifesto; and "freedom is impossible without equality, that is, so long as private property exists." "The French Revolution," Babeuf wrote, "is but the precursor of another revolution—much greater, much more solemn, which will be the last."

Future articles will examine in detail points that have only been indicated here. Let us conclude with three thoughts. First, the Revolution succeeded, from the Jacobins to Napoleon; they all "achieved the task of their day—which was to liberate the bourgeoisie and to establish modern bourgeois society" (Marx). Second, the Revolution had an enormous effect abroad, notably in England. While the reaction vented its spleen through the pen of Burke, organised interventionist war under Pitt, abused or pooh-poohed the revolutionary leaders (the ineffable Castlereagh referred to Carnot as "a foolish mathematician"!) democratic England answered through Tom Paine's "Rights of Man," organised its Corresponding Societies and in face of bitter persecution gathered its forces for the war against oligarchy and privilege that was to extend to Chartism and beyond. Third, the Revolution had about it, despite its mighty figures, an impressive anonymity; as William Cobbett said:

> The Revolution in France was accomplished—not by the aristocracy—not by military gentlemen with whiskers and long spurs—not even by the middle classes, but by the working people alone; by men who quitted their shops, who laid down their needles, and their awls, and their saws, and rushing out into the streets of Paris, said "If there be no alternative but slavery, let us put an end to the tyrants." I am pleased at the Revolution, particularly on this account, that it makes the working classes see their real importance, and those who despise them see it too.

To which we may add Lenin's description in 1917 of Jacobinism as "the greatest expression of an oppressed class in its struggle for liberation." To-day, Lenin added, the revolutionary class, the working-class, supported by its allies from the other oppressed sections of the people, can go forward to a new Jacobinism, which could "lead to a permanent triumph of the toilers throughout the world. . . . It is natural for the bourgeoisie to hate Jacobinism. It is natural for the petty bourgeoisie to fear it. The class-conscious workers and toilers have faith in the transfer of power to the revolutionary oppressed class, for *that* is the essence of Jacobinism. . . . The Jacobin, who is indissolubly bound to the organisation of the proletariat and has understood his class interests—he is a Bolshevik."

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The Causes of Crisis

BY EMILE BURNS

In his article on "Economic Crisis and Armaments," in the May issue of the Labour Monthly, John Knight states, "the chief features of an economy menaced by an over-production crisis" as :—

> 1. The production of capital goods, that is means of production, is growing faster than the (also growing) purchasing power of the buyers of means of production.
>
> 2. The production of consumption goods is growing faster than the (also growing) purchasing power of the consumers of these goods.

He explains further :

> In consequence of the increasing disparity between production and buying power, stocks begin to accumulate, larger and larger proportions of current production become unsaleable—and an over-production crisis breaks out.

He then proceeds to examine the situation in Germany, which according to him is "liable to over-production . . . as far as the production of civilian capital goods and of consumer goods is concerned ; but these civilian goods play a relatively smaller and smaller rôle in national economy," and therefore the crisis of over-production to which Stalin referred, must be over-production of war materials. He then proceeds to argue that this will arise when the State orders of war materials exceed the purchasing power of the State.

My purpose in examining this argument is not that I challenge the conclusion that an over-production crisis is possible in Germany ; on the contrary, I think it is certain to develop (if there is no war or revolution). But I consider John Knight's arguments unsound, and that the over-production crisis will develop in quite a different way.

First, I cannot accept the statement that the production of capital goods can exceed the purchasing power of the capitalists. The whole conception of "purchasing power" as something common to capitalists, the State, and the workers, is used by bourgeois economists to gloss over the difference between the capitalists and the workers ; it entirely ignores the distinction between wages and capital. Marx applied the idea of restricted "consumption" (purchasing power) *only to the masses*, not to the capitalists. He wrote (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 568) :—

> The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as if only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society were their limit.

In the same section he states that over-production of the means of production arises, not absolutely, *i.e.*, not because there is no capitalist with "purchasing power" to buy more raw materials, plant, etc.,—but relatively to the restricted consumption of the masses. The capitalist

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does not buy means of production because, at that time and place, he cannot use them *as capital*, he cannot find a profitable market for what they would produce if used for production. Therefore the idea of "purchasing power" as applied to the capitalists is wrong. Yet it is under cover of this idea as applied to the capitalists that John Knight goes on to apply it to the state, and to argue that the crisis in Germany will come when the State places orders in excess of its purchasing power.

Where does the purchasing power of the workers come from? From wages, a part of capital used in production. The total wages vary with production; that is, if production falls, total wages fall, though they may also fall from rationalisation or reduction in wage rates; taxation also reduces the effective consumption of the workers.

The State's "purchasing power" is not limited in this way. It can raise taxes and loans; it can also apply inflationary measures which have the effect of giving it money while at the same time putting up prices. There is no economic limit to the "purchasing power" of the State. It is a question of the policy of the capitalist group which controls the State, and its ability (by force or fraud) to extort from the workers and the general body of capitalists the additional taxes and loans they need to carry out their policy.

That is why during a war State orders can expand indefinitely without arousing resistance from the general body of capitalists, so long as the money required is raised by loans from them, inflation, and taxing the workers. The workers may revolt, as in Russia in 1917 and Germany in 1918; but there is nothing that can be called a crisis of over-production resulting from lack of purchasing power by the State.

Similarly, the Fascist State, controlled by the most aggressive and reactionary section of finance-capital, can go on extending its "purchasing power" by force and fraud; the only limiting factor is the growing political resistance of the people. The State will never be in the position, as John Knight suggests, of "ordering more than it can pay for," any more than the capitalists will ever be in that position. Therefore, such a statement as "War materials, just like all other commodities, have to be bought . . . If the State orders of war materials exceed the purchasing power of the State, then we have a genuine case of over-production"—does not correspond with reality.

Stalin, in foretelling a crisis of over-production in Germany, did not say that it would develop because armaments production would outrun the purchasing power of the State. On the contrary, he spoke of the increasing armaments production delaying the crisis of over-production. How will this crisis develop? Stalin gave a general indication. The extreme development of war industry means, he said, "restricting to the utmost the production and, especially, the sale of articles of general consumption—and consequently reducing consumption by the masses and confronting the country with an economic crisis." Thus although the war industry development is at first a

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factor that counteracts the crisis, in the sense of giving of more employment and maintaining the consumption of the masses, it also involves the increasing limitation of consumption, which will continue and intensify the crisis at a later stage.

This limitation of consumption takes place in two ways. There is first the increasingly heavy taxation, coupled with higher prices. But Stalin also calls attention to the fact that the production of articles of general consumption is restricted. At first sight this would seeem to be a factor delaying the outbreak of an over-production crisis. The point is, however, that imports are largely restricted to raw materials required for armaments production ; it is difficult to obtain raw materials for production for the civilian market at home, or for export articles.

With the decline in production for the civilian market must also go either unemployment, or the switching over of labour to armaments production. In the abstract, this switching over of labour to armaments production could go on indefinitely ; but in the present condition of Nazi Germany the limit is set, not by the purchasing power of the State in general, but by the limited amount of foreign exchange available for importing raw materials (that, by the way, is why the Czech gold was so important to Hitler.) At the same time, rationalisation is going ahead in the armaments industry. Any slowing down of the armaments industry owing to difficulties in obtaining raw materials will therefore necessarily mean unemployment both in the armaments industry and in civilian industry ; the consumption of the masses will fall sharply, and there will be an over-production crisis, not of armaments, but of articles of general consumption and of the means of production required for them (including of course raw materials.)

Whether or not the increasing financial and political difficulties will at the same time lead to a slowing down of armament *orders* is something that cannot be predicted with any certainty ; but it is by no means essential to the development of the crisis. On the contrary, the increased efforts to meet the cost of armaments by taxation and inflationary measures which put up prices will probably bring the consumption of the masses down sharply, thus producing the over-production crisis before the point is reached when the State finds it necessary to cut down armaments orders.

But it is clear that when the over-production of consumption goods develops (and with that, the over-production of raw materials and plant used in the making of consumption goods), it will speedily react on the political and financial position in such a way that armament orders have to be reduced. And that is why the armament orders, which for a period had the effect of postponing the crisis, will in the long run give the crisis an exceptionally deep and violent character. This of course, holds good not only for Germany, but also for Italy and Japan ; and for all three it holds good only unless political factors

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intervene—war for Germany and Italy ; revolution for Japan, which is already at war on a large scale.

John Knight's treatment of the crisis in Britain suffers from the same defect as his analysis of the German situation. He anticipates " an over-production crisis resulting from the giving of larger armament orders than the State can pay for." He then goes on to say that this would not apply under a People's Government, which would have at its disposal " considerably more purchasing power than the Chamberlain Government," because it would tax the rich and stop the profiteering in armaments. I don't think this is a very happy line of argument; it raises the question of the State's " purchasing power " for social development in addition to armaments development. If the line of argument is accepted, it seems clear that the combined armaments and social orders of the People's Government would be certain to cause a crisis of over-production " in the sphere of State orders " ; but this is not true. The expansion of State orders, either for armaments or social programmes, may cause political opposition, but they cannot possibly cause an over-production crisis.

In fact, when examining the British situation in more detail in the June LABOUR MONTHLY, John Knight seems to abandon this line of argument, and lays stress on the restriction of the consumption of the masses, through taxation and possibly higher prices, as the factor which will develop the crisis. It seems to me clear that further study of the economic position, both in fascist countries and in Britain, must have as its basis the developing crisis of over-production in the civilian market ; the effect of armament orders must be seen against this background, as a factor delaying the crisis but at the same time leading to further restriction of the consumption of the masses and therefore in the long run intensifying the crisis. The armament programmes, concentration of imports of raw materials to those required for armaments, increased taxation, inflationary measures —these are all important new features affecting the development of the crisis, but it is not a new *type* of crisis that is developing.

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The New Situation in China

1 The Protracted War

BY MAO TSE-TUNG

[*The following article is the first part of the abridged report to the Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the Communist Party of China, held on October* 12, 1938. *The remainder will be published in two further articles in subsequent numbers of the* LABOUR MONTHLY].

COMRADES, WE ARE opening the Sixth Plenum of our Party at a time when echoes of gunfire can be heard all over the nation and the menace of another great war hangs over the world. What are going to be our tasks ? What are our aims ? We must achieve long-term unity with all the patriotic parties and our patriotic fellow countrymen in order that we may overcome new difficulties and mobilize new forces. At present we must repulse the enemy's attack. In the future we must carry on our counter-offensive. We must reach the two-fold goal of driving Japanese imperialism out of China and of establishing a new democratic republic based upon Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's Three People's Principles. We must attain ultimate victory ! We must attain freedom ! These are our aims and they govern the general tendency of my report.

During the past five years our Party has passed through many changes, the principal ones being the change from the state of conflicting parties and classes to the establishment of the National Anti-Japanese United Front and the changes which have occurred between the period of Civil War and the National Anti-Japanese War.

What has caused the formation of the National Anti-Japanese United Front ? New historical circumstances have arisen. We all know that since the incident of September 18, 1931, the enemy of the Chinese people—Japanese imperialism—has advanced from invasion of the Four Eastern Provinces to preparation for aggression against the whole of China. Such heretofore unknown historical events have produced both internal and international changes. First, there were the changes in the unstable relationships between the various classes, parties and other organizations. At the same time there were also changes in the unstable international relations. Therefore, our Party, on this historical occasion of new internal relations and following the policy we formulated in 1933 (the three conditions under which we would unite with any element in the Kuomintang to form

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an Anti-Japanese United Front), was able to advance to the struggle for a National Anti-Japanese United Front. There were the declaration of August, 1935, the Resolution of December, 1935, the Letter to the Kuomintang in August, 1936, and the Resolution on a Democratic Government in September, 1936. Basing ourselves upon these rich experiences, we were able to maintain without any wavering the principle of a peaceful solution of the Sian Incident of December, 1936. We followed it with an appeal to the Third Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang for unity against Japan. In May, 1937, at a special meeting, at which were present delegates from the Chinese Soviets, non-Soviet districts, and the Red Army, a resolution was passed on the tasks of the National Anti-Japanese United Front at that time. The meeting approved the reorganization of the Red Army into the National Revolutionary Army and the transformation of the Soviets into a special district. Thus, the scene of civil war changed into the beginning of a new period of the National Anti-Japanese United Front. The Kuomintang began to change its policy and gradually came around to anti-Japanese unity. If there had been no change of policy on the part of the Kuomintang, it would have been impossible to build the National Anti-Japanese United Front.

The legal existence of the Communist Party of China was recognized and a united front for national salvation was formed. Eventually, the National Anti-Japanese United Front, based upon the united front between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, came into being. In December, 1937, in order to strengthen and to develop this National Anti-Japanese United Front, our Party declared that we joined in this United Front with the Kuomintang not only for the purpose of offering resistance to Japan, but also for the building of a new China.

This enlarged Sixth Plenum of our Party is being held at a critical juncture when we are about to enter a new stage of the National Anti-Japanese War. We, therefore, are faced with grave duties and tasks.

It has been proved that the Anti-Japanese War is a long war and not a short one. Accordingly, our strategy and tactics must be those of a long-term war and not those of a quick and decisive battle. In the second place, it has been proved that China's War of Resistance can be carried to the point of ultimate victory over Japan. Pessimism is without foundation. Third, it has been proved that the maintenance of a protracted war and the attainment of final victory over the enemy depends entirely on the combination of three factors, namely, the National United Front, the determined struggle toward progress and the support of the masses of the Chinese people. There is no other way to surmount the new obstacles standing between us and final victory.

Our strategy, therefore, must fit in with the protracted character of the war. This has been amply proved by the experiences of the past

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fifteen months.

What are the reasons ? The enemy is powerful while we are weak. The enemy is strategically better situated than we are. The enemy is an imperialist nation while China is a semi-colonial one.

We have pointed out long ago that there must be three conditions existing before we can attain victory over Japanese imperialism : the first—and this one is of major importance—China's progress ; the second, Japan's difficulties ; and the third, international assistance to China.

What are the enemy's weaknesses ? First, Japan is a comparatively small country, having insufficient military and financial powers to sustain a long period of unbalanced consumption. In the face of China's determined resistance Japan's insufficient military forces cannot avoid being wasted through being dispersed over large areas. There is no way by which she can occupy and hold the whole of China. The occupied areas will actually include only the large cities, lines of communication and some stretches of level country. The remaining areas will still be under Chinese rule. Second, for Japan this war is imperialist in character, it is reactionary. Her internal contradictions force upon her a policy of barbarous plunder, and compel her to carry on a war of aggression. The war, on the other hand, has evolved into a struggle of the entire Chinese people and resulted in unification of all classes, political parties and all other organizations into a common front, and at the same time, it has called forth a struggle on the part of the Japanese people themselves against Japanese imperialism. The mobilization of men and materials by the Japanese imperialists has already created much discontent among the Japanese people and among the soldiers at the front and rear. Indubitably, further development of the war will tend to force the Japanese people and soldiers to fight against the war itself. There have been signs of such action during the past fifteen months. This anti-war feeling and action within the enemy camp is basically one of the causes of Japan's ultimate defeat. Third, the character of the war being imperialist, and therefore selfish, Japan is running against other nations who have interests opposed to those of imperialist Japan. With the exception of two or three Fascist powers the rest of the nations in the world and especially their peoples are opposed to Japan's war of aggression. This must cause a shrinkage of Japan's sphere of international activities. Her position will become more and more isolated. This has been shown to be true by the experience of the past fifteen months.

What are the points favourable to us ? First, China is a vast country, rich in human power and natural resources. Granted that the enemy has occupied our large cities and lines of comminucation, we still have tremendously vast areas of territory as bases of operation in a war of resistance protracted to the ultimate victory. This is, of course, especially and fundamentally a different case from that of a smaller

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country such as Czechoslovakia or Belgium—it is most decidedly in our favour. Second, the present national war of resistance is not the same as any other war in the history of China. Ours is a national revolutionary war. It is progressive. Not only the war itself is progressive, but it is being fought at a time, when, for the first time in the history of China, we are laying firm foundations for future development. Modern China is different in every aspect from historic China. We have a people more progressive than at any time in the long past, forward-looking political parties, and an awakened army. In this fundamentally progressive National Anti-Japanese War, there is an inherent force struggling for continuous progress. From our standpoint this is the basic factor, enabling our country to maintain a protracted war until Japan is finally defeated. Our recent experience shows that this sacred national revolutionary war, basing itself upon the progress that has been made, is being made, and will be made, has already greatly advanced the entire nation. The old, corrupt tradition is decaying, the new people's progressive force is growing and the great National United Front for progress and development is in the process of completion. Post-war China will certainly be much different from the China before the war. Anyone with eyes can see this much. It is possible to predict that our country in the second stage of the war will not be the same as during the first stage (at present not yet concluded). Third, China does not occupy an isolated position in this war. Even if the capitalist nations continue to maintain some of their contradictory policies and even if the international situation to a certain degree unfavourably affects the rendering of assistance to us by foreign nations, China's Anti-Japanese War and the world struggle against Fascism are indivisible. The war of resistance against Japanese aggression does not concern China alone. It is of concern to Europeans, Americans, Africans, Australians and all the other peoples of Asia. The aid from all over the world during the past fifteen months has given reality to this belief. While mainly depending upon the unfolding of our inherent power, we can count on aid from the world at large. The world is different from that of yesterday. All the progressive peoples have an intimate mutual relationship. We stand or fall together. That is why the enemy has failed in his attempt to isolate us.

The enemy's power and our weakness determine that the war will be a protracted struggle. Our plans must be formulated accordingly.

The sole way to maintain a protracted war to the ultimate victory is through a firm national unity, striving for progress and based upon the support of the masses of China.

To maintain the protracted war to the desired end, it is necessary to activise the inherent power at present lying dormant in all classes of our people. This activisation can only be realised through advancement in military, political, party, and cultural work, and in the work of organising the people. Without such advancement it would be

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impossible to activise the entire nation and to further extend our national unity.

The protracted nature of the present Sino-Japanese war will be made manifest on the one hand by the enemy's advance, the stalemate and the enemy's defeat ; and on the other by our stubborn resistance, the stalemate and our counter-offensive. The first stage was the enemy's advance and our resistance, because of the enemy's strength and our weakness (an imperialist power in a good strategic position against a semi-colonial country in a bad strategic position.) The word retreat is not used here because Japan has run head on against China's stubborn resistance many times and China's withdrawals have been largely a part of the strategic defence, not the result of cowardice, nor carried out in disorder. Moreover, the smallness of reactionary and isolated Japan and the vastness of progressive China not lacking in assistance from the world at large, together with our heroic fighting forces, have forced Japan to scatter her military power so that she has suffered enormously heavy losses. Above all, with her available forces, Japan is constrained to conclude her military advances within a limited period and to turn to the defence of the occupied areas and carry out political and economic penetration of these areas. Up to now, although Japan has suffered serious losses, they have not yet reached a degree sufficient to cause her defeat. Although our resistance has been stubborn and devastating and we have made marked progress, the progress has not been so far-reaching as to enable China to launch a counter-offensive to drive the enemy out of the country. Consequently a stalemate in this war is making its appearance. Within this second stage of the war, the enemy's difficulties and our strength will be on the increase day by day and the changing international situation will grow more and more favourable to China and against Japan. A reversal of the situation in which the enemy was strong and we were weak will gradually make itself manifest. With the situation growing daily worse for the enemy and better for us, we come to the period of equalisation of forces of the opposing sides and then to the time when our situation will be better than that of the enemy. That is the point at which the third stage of the war makes its appearance.

Advocates of quick victory are not in agreement with the theory of three stages. They are in favour of an immediate counter-offensive without the intervening stage. This is incorrect. There are many difficulties facing us in our anti-Japanese war. Accordingly, time is needed to overcome these difficulties. It is impossible to carry out an immediate counter-offensive with any hope of coming out victorious. They are against the idea of three stages because of their underestimation of the enemy's power on the one hand and their overestimation of our strength on the other. The defeatists are also against the theory of three stages. They believe categorically that it is

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impossible to maintain the stalemate and later to carry on a counter-offensive. According to them, China is another Ethiopia. This is also incorrect. As against the advocates of quick victory they overestimate the enemy's power and underestimate our own strength.

During the time of the Changkufeng incident certain sections of our public opinion were full of hilarious optimism. To these optimistic people it seemed evident that the moment war broke out between Japan and the Soviet Union, China could launch her counter-offensive against Japan without any preparation for a long-term war. Against this view, of course, the theory of three stages could not stand and our estimate would be wrong. But this school of thought, putting China's dependence mainly upon foreign aid, is another branch of the theory of quick victory. As it was, the international situation did not develop according to the wishful thinking of our friends ; once more as always, it changed according to its own laws.

The centre of gravity of the world is in Europe. At the moment there is a series of war crises on the continent of Europe. The solution of European problems must be the primary concern of all large and small nations of Europe, and problems in Asia or any other place in the world can only occupy their secondary attention. Reasoning along this line, we know immediately that the two-stage and the quick victory theories cannot justify themselves. Relying upon our own inherent power, we not only should not fear the war being lengthened to three stages, but we should strive to so lengthen it. The theory of three stages is the law according to which the present Sino-Japanese war has developed and is developing, based upon the relative power of the two opposing sides and the changing international situation.

The three-stage war is characterised by its transitional stage. In the case of our war of resistance, we must first of all stop the enemy's advance. If the enemy's advance could not be stopped within a specified period of time and within a specified area, there would not be a three-stage war. Moreover, in this stage of stale-mate, we have an opportunity to exert ourselves to the utmost to create the necessary conditions for our counter-offensive later. If we fail to utilise the opportunity, we shall not be able to pass on to the stage of our counter-offensive. This will produce a phenomenon of permanent stalemate. The war will, then, not be a three-stage one. Here we say emphatically to the advocates of a quick victory : there must be a period of preparation in which we can strengthen our national unity, surmount various difficulties and organise new forces. Then with increasing international assistance and the enemy's growing difficulties we will launch a counter-offensive to drive the Japanese imperialists out of China. If we regard the situation from the standpoint of relying mainly upon the support of our own people, we cannot help arriving at this conclusion. Here we say emphatically to the defeatists and

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pessimists: this transitional stage is the turning point of our war of resistance. The question of whether China will be transformed into a vassal state or a liberated nation has not been decided by the losses of our great cities and lines of communication during the first stage of this war. It is certainly a pity that we have lost many large cities and lines of communication thereby strengthening the enemy and weakening ourselves. But we can make full use of the territories which we have not lost and which we can use as bases for our future victory over the enemy.

The objective of the defence of Wuhan is two-fold, namely, to exhaust the enemy's power and to gain time for the accomplishment of nationally progressive tasks. Strategy for the defence of one point to the last should not be employed. When the military situation has been proved to be definitely unfavourable and surrender of a place is of benefit to us, we should adopt the principle of surrender in order to preserve our military forces. It is necessary to avoid any overwhelmingly decisive unfavourable battles. In this war we should not fight any strategically decisive battles during the first and second stages. Such engagements will seriously affect the stalemate and interfere with our preparations for the future counter-offensive. To avoid strategically decisive battles and to engage the enemy this way only under favourable conditions is part of the plan to maintain the stalemate. Under definite conditions the surrender of certain cities at opportune moments is not only the result of being forced to do so, but also of our positive policy of luring the enemy into deep waters in which his forces will become scattered, exhausted and used up. In our plan of protracted warfare the surrender of a certain point because of too costly defence is not incompatible with the principle of long-term resistance. No one need be alarmed at this.

The enemy will not conclude his offensive with the occupation of Wuhan. He must continue on to attack Sian, Ichang, Changsha, Hengyang, Wuchow, Pakhoi, Nanchang, Swatow, Foochow and their surrounding areas. In order to stop the enemy's offensive, we must be guided by his aspirations in deciding our defensive strategy and offer stubborn resistance, so that his power will be consumed far beyond his expectations. This will compel the enemy to call a halt to the offensive and with China not ready to launch a counter-offensive the war will pass over to a stage of stalemate.

After Japan has occupied our large cities and lines of communication she will carry on offensives from the cities and we will face the invaders from the villages and the country. Can the villages and the country triumph over the cities? It is difficult, but it can be done.

In a capitalist nation the city towers over the country villages. Consequently, after the loss of such a city the surrounding country villages cannot exist, they are like limbs without the head. One cannot imagine a peasant revolt in modern England, France, the United

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States, Germany, Italy, or Japan being maintained for any length of time. Neither is a peasant revolt possible in a small semi-colony. In a semi-colonial nation of China's size, such a revolt would have been an extremely difficult undertaking a few decades ago. But in a great modern semi-colonial nation, such as China to-day, it is quite possible. This is shown by the combination of the following three factors.

(*a*) Semi-colony. In such a nation, although the large city occupies a leading position, it cannot exercise complete control over the villages and their surrounding country, because the city is small in comparison with the expanse of the country and its numerous villages. By far the greater amount of man power and material strength lies in the vast country, not in the city. (*b*) Largeness of territory. We still have a large country after the loss of a part of our territory. Japan is invading a large country with a relatively small army, which has already suffered, through our stubborn resistance, many difficulties in being weakened and scattered. This is, however, not the only basis for united resistance. There is no possibility for the enemy to occupy our great bases in the rear, the provinces of Yunnan, Kweichow, Szechuan, etc. Furthermore, we have extensive guerrilla activities covering large areas in North, Central and South China so that it is impossible for the enemy to complete her occupation. (*c*) China of to-day. If a strong imperialist power had invaded China several decades ago, as Britain's invasion of India, there would have been no escape from complete subjugation. To-day it is a different matter. China has made marked progress in the development of her political parties, in organising her army, and with unifying her people. A progressive China is the basic force that will triumph over the enemy. Japan is on the decline. The path of economic and social development of imperialist Japan is drawing toward the end. Japanese capitalism, in its development, has created its own grave diggers. Moreover, there is the changing international situation. The old world is dying and a new one is being born.

When we speak of the country villages we don't mean merely those in the areas of our recent Civil War. Now we have extensive territory with many cities and in Yunnan, Kweichow and Szechuan there are cities and industries. From these great bases we can still communicate with other nations, carry on constructive work to prepare for the defence of the great interior and establish guerrilla bases. In this relatively long stage we shall be able to replenish our reservoir of fighting power and simultaneously cut down the enemy's forces. Then with the changing international situation we can launch our counter-offensive.

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BOOK REVIEW

The New Russian Theatre

The Theatre in a Changing Europe. Edited by Professor T. H. Dickinson. (Putnam, 15s.)
Moscow Rehearsals by Norris Houghton. (Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d.)
Footnotes on the Theatre. Edited by R. D. Charques. (Peter Davies, 18s.)
Theatre in Action by Geoffrey Whitworth (Studio, 10s. 6d.)

WHEN THE LEADERS of the October Revolution took over the Russian theatre for the use, enjoyment and education of the entire community of the Soviet Socialist Union they included it in the Five Year Plan.

The idea of the Plan concerning the U.S.S.R. was the simple and single one of the building of national economy and the attainment of a country and community that should differ from those of capitalist democracies. The theatre was to reflect the Plan with its whole train of new ideas, policies, principles, experiences and the like. It was to work in union with the people and to supply that information which the people required in order to understand the new social ideas, and the processes of remoulding themselves with their Soviet labour. So the theatre was to be the consequence of the Plan, and the vast national dramatic pageant of the unfolding of Russia and its teeming millions at the touch of new experiences was to be epitomised for dramatisation within theatrical limits. Herein was the idea and purpose of a new theatre, one that necessarily differed from the pre-revolution Russian theatre, and the theatres of capitalist democracies.

The actuality of the idea was at first impeded by intellectuals who did not accept the new order. But since 1928, it has attained full actuality and to-day the Soviet theatre has attained the meaning and function of a socialist, Soviet collectivist theatre. It is the only one in the world.

Books on this theatre continue to appear that pay very little attention to the real nature and implications of the Soviet theatre and its form of drama. Their writers show almost an idolatrous attitude towards the pre-revolution rebel (or more truly reformist) theatre with its individualistic intellectuals, old traditions and systems, and the post-revolution leaning towards the traditions, technical theories and practices and plays of capitalist democracies.

Four recent books illustrate my meaning.

The first, " The Theatre in a Changing Europe," a symposium conducted by Professor T. H. Dickinson of America includes two important contributions on the Russian theatre. One reveals Dr. Joseph Greger, of Vienna, in the idolatrous mood upholding the revolutionary origin of the Soviet theatre in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He analyses the Soviet theatre with the old rebel and reformist tradition of literature and the theatre and claims that he finds in them the power or principle which has given the Soviet theatre life. The assault on decadent society and stage by discontents like Ostrovsky, Gogol, Chekov, the parents and children of the Moscow Art Theatre, Stanislavski, Meierhold, Tairov and the 1905 revolution, and other pre-war objects and agents are causes of which the Soviet theatre is the effect. In accepting these objects and agents as the cause of the Soviet theatre,

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Dr. Gregor is deceiving himself. It is true that the new proletarian reconstruction forces have come to appreciate the Russian classics and pre-war authors who made war on the social evils of their day, and to understand the high importance of the Russian national tradition contained in the great legacy of peasant aesthetic and vital expression utilised by the Tsarist intellectualists in music, literature, the drama, and so on. But this old traditional material is not the building material of the new Russian theatre. It is the new Soviet tradition makes the old tradition important, not the old tradition makes the Soviet theatre. Dr. Gregor is not concerned with this distinction, but with showing that the Russian theatre evolves through Tsarist tradition to Soviet tradition (as he knows it). His knowledge of the latter appears in appreciations of its world importance and its magnificent organisation, and plays in the Soviet tradition.

Professor H. W. L. Dana, of America, also stands for the supremacy of the Tsarist tradition in theatrical and literary matters. But he provides striking evidence of something that surpasses the alleged Tsarist supremacy. In a striking catalogue of Soviet plays and synopses he suggests the increasing popular appetite for matter calculated to educate the new public to their high responsibilities as Soviet citizens. He arranges the plays in the order of times and events. First, those in the revolutionary tradition. Then the Five Years Plan tradition—peasant, agricultural and industrial. But he misses the great 1928-37 unifying period of olympiads, festivals, jubilees and guesting of national minorities. He stops short at 1935 with a hymn of praise to the theatrical forces of 100 years ago, instead of to those of the moment. The thing he has not noticed is that in the new Russia the thinkers do not govern the toilers, but the reverse.

The second book, though admirable in its conventional way is also likely to please a class of readers who enjoy watching an author deceive himself. Mr. Houghton explains and praises the old tradition of producing and acting. In 1934-5 he spent six months in Moscow studying this subject. By the numbers in his index, he gave much of his time to the Moscow Art theatre and the Meierhold playhouse, and, next to these, other academic and intellectual survivals. He glanced at one or two proletarian playhouses. On the whole he examined much that has already been examined by visiting scribes. And two years later he returned to Moscow for a glance round only to find matter for tears. Some of his favourites had disappeared and unknown to him remarkable developments had taken place which he had not the knowledge to observe. For instance, the results of the all-Union theatrical policy of the Government were making history.

The third book, a symposium edited by R. D. Charques, is not more helpful in revealing the truth about the Russian theatre. The object of his 335 pages is to tell us about aspects of the conventional theatre as 18 English and one Russian witnesses see it. Mr. Charques opens with the headline question, "What's wrong with the Theatre To-day?" One would have thought that his answer would be, "capitalist exploitation and control," but he is more concerned with showing what is wrong with Mr. Charques. His defect is that he cannot handle English words to mean anything. Here is Mr. Charques :—

> Commercialism is only the outward sign and symbol of the forces working upon the theatre, what is wrong with the theatre, in fact, is the public, society, civilisation, the times we live in.

Mr. Charques does not define his words, but doubtless they will please his commercial symposiasts.

Miss Sylvia Saunders has an article on the Russian theatre. She is said to be "interested in cooking," and her article may be condensed to the following

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simple recipe. Take a theatre three parts in the old intellectual tradition. Soak it in a revolution and civil war. Add " the spirit of the mass choral and crowd movements which have since been copied all over the world on stage and screen and wireless." Sprinkle in a few " political-morality plays that are not lacking in humour but are thrilling only to the converted "—" Fear," " Squaring the Circle," " Tempo," and the like. Surround with " socialist realism, a hearty moralism related to life." Decorate with effigies of " Fallen Angels "—Stanislavski, Meierhold, Tairov. (When did Stanislavski fall ?) Season with traditional Moscow Art Theatre method of production and the Kamerny system of " producing the synthetic actor." Serve hot with other confusions and contradictions as " a communist theatre in the dictator country."

The fourth book, " Theatre in Action," is an admirable production of 150 plates on shiny art paper surveying recent fashions in scenic formalism in England and America and European countries. They serve nicely to illustrate the common fault of formalistic scenery in action on the stage, in that it centres attention on itself and obscures or takes the place of content. We cannot think of the play because of the way it is clothed. That was the trouble in Russia till the Soviet Government discovered, after Marx, that the value of a Soviet socialist play was in its content, not in its trimmings. There are only 12 Russian plates in this book and with the exception of two (Gypsy theatre) they illustrate the work of designers and directors who held the theory that stage decoration has much to do with the merit of a play. This theory was dominant in the European theatres in the 1890's. After the Revolution it continued to swamp a section of the Russian theatre with formalism till it was challenged and its worst effect removed. The first to challenge it were the proletarians who fought against the theoretic influence of the capitalist democracies with a theory of staging that has exerted a strong influence on rebel theatre groups outside the U.S.S.R. The book is on the side of the European intelligensia tradition, but a study of its plates reveal here and there the reaction to the Soviet workers' scenic ideas, in particular the idea that the theatre and decoration are implicit in the drama, and the drama and decoration are implicit in song and dance and music. The idea is in the Moscow Peoples' Theatre tradition to-day.

HUNTLY CARTER.

Chartism

When England Arose by Salme A. Dutt. Key Books No. 6. (Fore Publications Ltd. 64 pp. 2d.)

WHEN LENIN 20 years ago signed the leaflet to be distributed amongst the British soldiers at Archangel, urging them not to shoot their Russian fellow-workers and calling on them *to remember the deeds of their Chartist forefathers*, it was done because the influence of revolutionary tradition can be of immense importance. Just for the same reason, the capitalist rulers of Britain did their very utmost to blot out the memory of Chartism. But such a movement as that of the Chartists could not be blotted out. Twenty years ago the writer, speaking in an Essex village, was gladdened to hear the words of an aged labourer, whose frame shook with passion as he recalled the deeds of the Chartists and the ideas which he had once heard " spoken with burning eloquence from the lips of Ernest Jones."

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Nevertheless the great richness of the Chartist struggle was largely veiled from their descendants: and it is only now, amid the battles of to-day, that full memory of these struggles of our forebears is being restored.

In this restoration the Key Book by Salme A. Dutt will play no small part. Clearly and simply it tells the story of the Chartists; so that the meaning of a movement which lasted for so many years is brought out in a way that everyone can grasp. It is easy to tell of the Luddites or the General Strike, just as a military historian may with facility describe the campaign of Blenheim or Waterloo. But to give a lucid picture of the Thirty Years War is not so easy. And our author is dealing with a war of classes that from its origin has lasted much longer than 30 years, and whose vicissitudes in the Chartism period are hard to bring within short and intelligible compass. How is it Salme Dutt has succeeded so well in this task? She has woven into the story a clear analysis of the class forces, of the development from one stage to another; she shows the background, the conditions of the people, the expression of their misery and their will to struggle; she tells of the leaders, their strength and their weakness, who they were, what views they held and how they acted; until the whole of Chartism comes to life as a movement. This is why she has succeeded where books of the last thirty years have so largely failed. The people of England, above all the working class, are seen in movement, politically awakened, fighting for political power in reliance on their own strength, aiming to end oppression and exploitation.

"England," said Lenin, "gave the world the first broad, really mass, politically formed proletarian revolutionary movement, to wit, Chartism."

Those who would hear its story and learn its lessons for us to-day should make haste to read and re-read *When England Arose*.

R. P. A.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

How Strong is Britain? Count Pücklen. (Routledge.) 7s. 6d. 263 pp.

Liberty and Authority in the Modern World. Henry Carter. (Merttens Lecture Committee.) 6d. 79 pp.

You Have Lived Through All This. Edward Thompson. (Gollancz.) 7s. 6d. 288 pp.

Lenin: Selected Works, Vols. 11 and 12. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 5s. each.

Rent Rebates. Geoffrey Wilson. (Fabian Society and Gollancz.) 1s. 56 pp.

The Crisis in Physics. Christopher Caudwell. (John Lane.) 7s. 6d. 245 pp.

The Criminal in Society. H. T. F. Rhodes. (Lindsay Drummond.) 7s. 6d. 280 pp.

What is Marxism? Emile Burns. (Gollancz.) 1s. 6d. 94 pp.

Blanqui. Neil Stewart. (Gollancz.) 10s. 6d. 352 pp.

These Poor Hands. B. L. Coombes. (Gollancz.) 7s. 6d. 286 pp.

New Tendencies in Colonial Policy. War and Colonies. (Pacifist Research Bureau.) 2d. each. 16 pp.

British Wages Boards. Dorothy Sells. (Brookings Institution, Washington.) $3.00. 289 pp.

Fascist Danger and the Unemployed. Wal Hannington. (National Unemployed Workers' Movement.) 1d. 16 pp.

Guide to Unemployment Insurance, Part 1. (National Unemployed Workers' Movement.) 2d. 16 pp.

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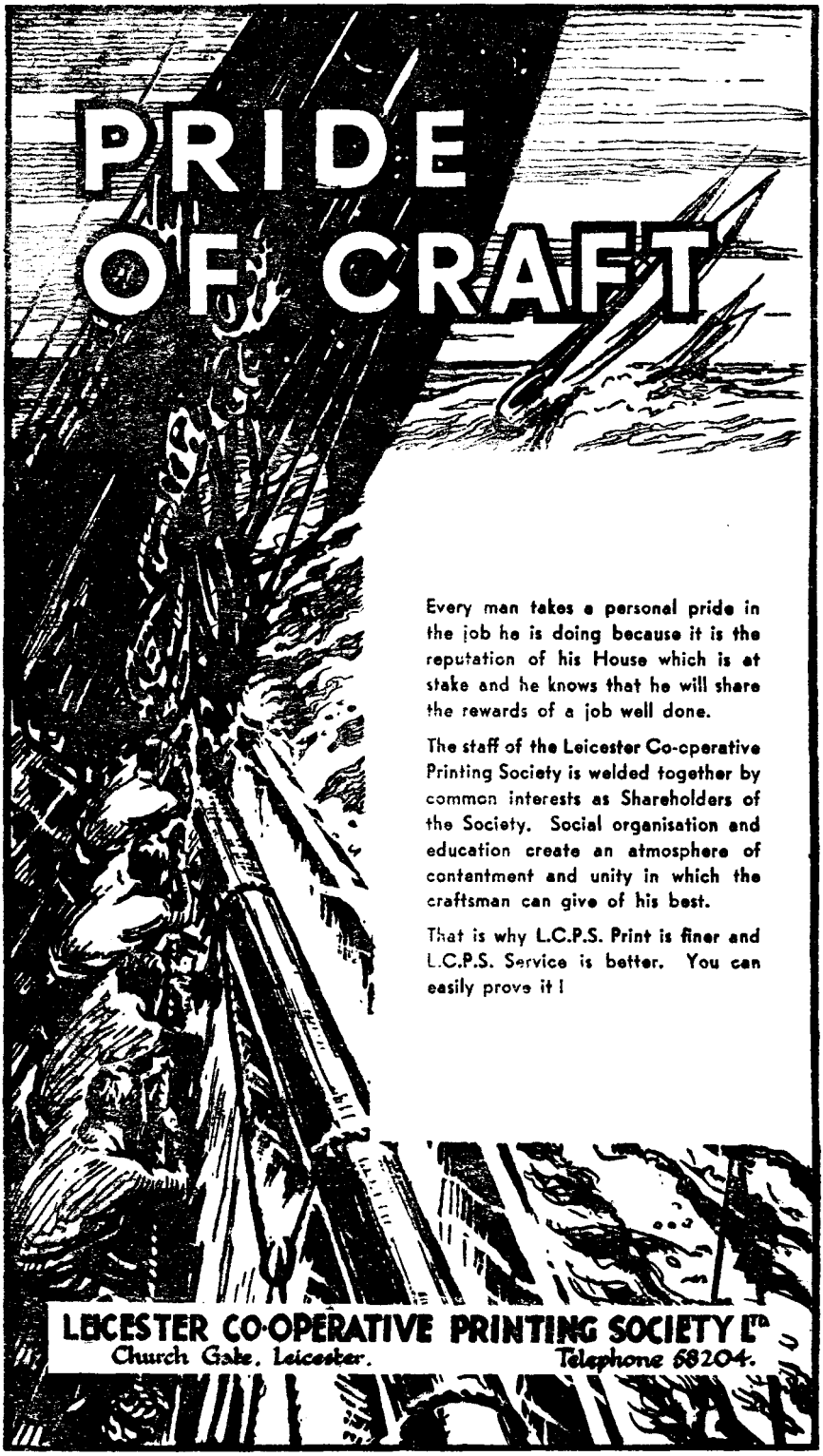
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